CUHK Webinar Series

香港中文大學
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

CUHK
SOCIOLOGY
中大社會系

Social and lifestyle factors of cognitive status and change among middle-aged and older Americans

by Prof. Ming WEN   *The University of Utah*

HKT | **May 27, 2022 Friday**
AM 09:30 - 11:00

Scan to register

Webinar via
ZOOM

This study examines whether cognitive status and change are associated with social ties, social engagement, and lifestyle factors among middle-aged and older Americans in the general population and individuals with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) at the baseline. Data used are from the second (collected in 2010-2011) and third (2015-2016) waves of the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP) conducted by investigators at the University of Chicago. Cognitive health is measured using the Montreal Cognitive Assessment (MoCA). The results show that having close social ties, being socially engaged, and following certain lifestyles (e.g., exercising) are prospectively linked to better cognitive status. Meanwhile, among the 972 participants marked with MCI at the baseline, 22.1% (N=215) became cognitively normal, and 11.5% (N=112) progressed into dementia five years later. Social engagement predicts a higher likelihood of transitioning from MCI to normal cognition. Having more close ties, and to a lesser extent, social engagement, appear preventive against the transition from MCI to dementia. In these transitions, the role of lifestyle factors is minimum. Social relationship and activity interventions may be fruitful for promoting cognitive health and preventing dementia in the middle and later life.

Ming Wen obtained a B.S. in Information Management and Information Systems from Peking University and an M.S. in Statistics and Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Chicago. She is a professor and former chair in the Department of Sociology at the University of Utah, a former standing member of an NIH study section, and currently serving as the Deputy Editor for the Journal of Health & Social Behavior. She conducts quantitative research on various topics regarding social determinants of health and human development in the United States and China. Her US-based studies have examined neighborhood and family effects on a wide range of health and lifestyle outcomes across the life course. Her recent China-based work focuses on how rural and urban origin and residence play a role in child developmental outcomes and how living arrangements and socio-relational resources affect health and well-being among middle-aged and older adults. Her research has been supported by funding from the National Institutes of Health and private foundations. Her articles have been published in high-impact journals such as *Demography, Social Forces, Social Science & Medicine, Social Science & Research, Child Development,* and *the American Journal of Public Health.*

Co-organized by
Health Cluster
Center for Population Research (CPR)

Enquiry: (852) 2603 7332 / socrpg@cuhk.edu.hk