

Press Conference on Research Findings
jointly organised by CADENZA and the Faculty of Social Sciences of HKU

**CADENZA's Studies Reveal
Significant Misconceptions Relating to Ageing and that
Health Services Fail to Meet the Elderly's Expectations**

“CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors”, a five-year project initiated by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust in collaboration with the Faculty of Medicine of The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Faculty of Social Sciences of The University of Hong Kong, today (18 February 2009) reveals the findings of its two recent studies showing that there are significant knowledge gaps and misconceptions on ageing among the general public, including the elderly themselves. Existing health services also fall short of expectations and improvement is needed.

A questionnaire-based survey involving nearly 3,000 participants of all ages, conducted by CADENZA on knowledge and attitudes towards ageing, showed that the general public and health professionals:

- had pervasive negative perceptions of ageing;
- had poor health literacy (except health professionals);
- perceived elderly people as dependent on others for health matters;
- lacked knowledge regarding home aids;
- had unrealistic expectations of the prolongation of dying elderly people's lives; and
- lacked legal knowledge about enduring powers of attorney on assisting older people in handling financial issues.

Another CADENZA focus group study in which health care service providers and elderly people were interviewed to collect views on elderly service needs from the users' perspective found that the elderly wanted their health services to have:

- fast access;
- affordability;
- sufficient provision of available services information; and
- continuity of care and smooth transition.

The studies recommended the public should acquire a new perspective on elderly care in six areas: ageism and age disparity; optimising mental and physical function; knowledge of services and self-help; living environment; the quality of dying; and legal and financial issues.

The studies also recommended health services in Hong Kong should provide adequate and accessible medical services, improve co-ordination of health and social care, reduce negative perceptions of ageing, and increase training needs for the public and health professionals.

In line with the six themes, CADENZA's public awareness and education programmes diffuse relevant knowledge to empower the public and the elderly. The CADENZA Training Programme provides free-of-charge thematic courses on gerontology for the general public, informal caregivers of older people and professional social and healthcare workers who are working with the ageing population in order to enhance their caring skills. In collaboration with Radio Television Hong Kong Radio 5, CADENZA has begun a series of interactive public education events across the 18 districts in Hong Kong from January 2009 to June 2010.

On co-ordination between health and social services, CADENZA is conceptualising a user-oriented integrated service centre for the elderly. By adopting a case management approach, the centre will provide a seamless one-stop service in a trans-disciplinary manner.

“A wide variety of health and social services have been provided to meet the needs of elderly people. However, there has been little evaluation from the users' perspective regarding what the needs are and how well current service provisions match their needs. Through the two studies, CADENZA aims to provide new attitude and new direction in elderly care to create an elder-friendly environment in Hong Kong,” said Professor Jean Woo, CADENZA Project Director.

Miss Bonny Wong, Head of Charities of The Hong Kong Jockey Club said, “CADENZA has always emphasised research and evidence-based approach. We hope the results of these studies can arouse the attention of and fuel discussions among the service providers, government, academics and the general public. CADENZA will develop pilot projects and public education programmes based on these findings, in pursuit of improving the quality of life of elderly people in Hong Kong.”

CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors is a \$380 million and 5-year project initiated and funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust in light of a rapidly ageing population. Faculty of Social Sciences, The University of Hong Kong and Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong are the project partners. It aims at creating an elder-friendly community which fosters positive community attitude towards older people and continuously improves the quality of care and quality of life for Hong Kong's elderly. Please refer to the fact sheet or visit the project website www.cadenza.hk for details of the programmes.

Note to Editors:

1. Please visit www.cadenza.hk/eng/press for event photos and presentation materials.
2. For media enquiries, please contact:
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About CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors

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CADENZA is an acronym for “Celebrate their Accomplishments: Discover their Effervescence and Never-ending Zest as they Age.” In classical music, a 'Cadenza' is an extended virtuosic section, usually near the end of a movement in a concerto. The word is used here in a figurative context to describe the apex of one's life and the celebration of a lifetime's accomplishments.

CADENZA has 6 major project components:

1. ***Community Projects*** are innovative and sustainable service models to cope with changing needs of seniors.
2. ***Research Training Workshop*** is to nurture academic leadership in social gerontology.
3. ***Research*** is to advance gerontological knowledge and to evaluate the outcomes of different CADENZA projects.
4. ***Public Awareness*** seeks to promote positive ageing and highlight important issues pertaining to elderly population, covering 6 major themes: (i) health promotion and maintenance, (ii) health and social services in Hong Kong, (iii) living environment, (iv) financial and legal issues, (v) quality of life and quality of dying, and (vi) age disparities.
5. ***Symposium*** is to provide a platform where the overseas and local experts can exchange new insights in the understanding of ageing issues.
6. ***Training*** includes on-line courses, workshops and public seminars to train different levels of professional front-line workers, caregivers and the general public.