

Abstract

Moving Forward with Health Promotion & Active Ageing in Hong Kong: Alignments of Policy Trends in Asia and the Pacific

Population ageing is an unprecedented phenomenon happening around the world. People are living longer and healthier because of the advancement in socio-economic conditions. In the Asia Pacific Region, many countries have experienced significant increase in life-expectancy. It has become an issue of concern due mainly to the rapid increase of aged population combined with the ever-decreasing fertility rate in the Region. The good news for Asians is healthy life expectancy, which notes a disability-free period of life, is increasing too. The World Health Report 2002 revealed that the highest life expectancy was in Japan. Male Japanese is expected to live 72.3 years of life in a healthy state while healthy life expectancy for female Japanese is 77.7. Yes, people are living longer, but they are having more problems on health entering longer life. It is expected to have more than 60% increases for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in developing countries by 2020 (World Health Organization, 2002). Risk factors of NCDs like smoking and unhealthy eating habits will emerge as economy picks up. Prevention of NCDs hence becomes an important discussion for policy makers

The present paper reports policy directives initiated by key international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), World Health Organization (WHO) & United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), these agencies have engaged in visionary initiatives to understand and meet the challenges of the aging population by promoting healthy and active ageing. UN in particular has a policy directive since the first ageing agenda in Vienna in 1982 (the First World Assembly for ageing), then the International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) with 62 action recommendations (United Nations, n.d.) adopted in 1982 for full participation by all ages on the basis of an equitable distribution of resources. At the turn of the 2000s when aging became the biggest challenge for almost all developed countries. In response to the MIPAA, ESCAP produced a set of action recommendations tailor-made for countries in the Asia Pacific with one of the priority areas echoing the importance of the health promotion (The original four Key Priority Areas are: 1. Older Persons and Development; 2. Advancing Health and Well-being into Old Age; 3. Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environment; 4. Implementation and Follow-up Action by the Government). It will be evident that health promotion forms the front and foremost part of any desirable health and social care systems in the Asia Pacific, the active ageing framework has been adopted to frame the health promotion strategies and programmes in Hong Kong. Research team: **Chan, Alfred C-M PhD.; Tang, Phoebe P-Y BA; & Ma, Carol H-K PhD.**