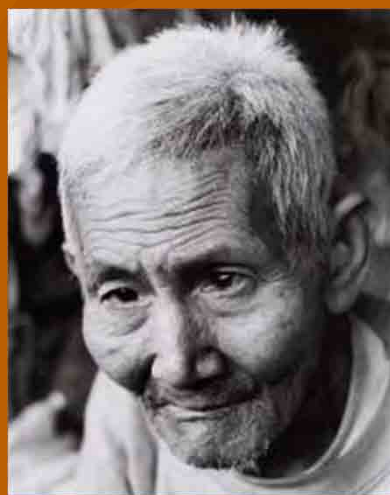


Work & Rehabilitation 2011: An Interdisciplinary Symposium

The Aging Population – Vocation & Employment: social perspectives

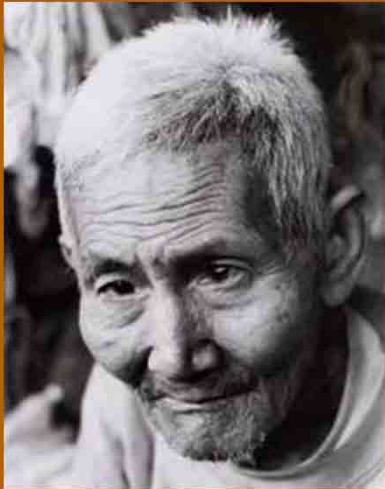


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Outline



- **Aging, Health & Work**
- **Labour Market Characteristics of Aged Worker in HK**
- **Occupational Health & Safety of Aged Workers in HK**

Aging Population - Hong Kong Context

- Hong Kong is entering an ageing society. In 2010, the population aged at or above 65 is 920,000 (13 % of the population)
- The figure is expected to increase to 2.5 million (28 % of population) in 2039.
(Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong Population Projections 2011-2039).

Aging, Health & Work

- Aging was one but not a decisive factor affecting the health condition and working ability of aged workers to different extents
- Even though it was closely related with decrement in physical condition.
- Many people **stayed healthy and capable in aging.**



Pay Jobs & Sense of Self

- **Stiglitz (2001):** Individuals who lose their jobs feel unhappy—unhappier than others with the same level of income. It is thus not *just* the loss of income that matters. It is the individual's sense of self.
- Unemployment is associated with a whole variety of pathologies, from higher divorce rates, higher suicide rates, higher incidence of alcoholism.
- **The employment relationship, the fact that someone else recognizes their “contribution” by paying them, is important**

Employment status, social support, and life satisfaction

- Aquino (et al.) (1996) examined in a sample of 292 community-living elderly (aged 65–97 yrs)
- **The number of hours worked at a paying job, lower levels of depression, and greater perceived social support were directly related to higher levels of life satisfaction**
- Social support mediated the effects of volunteer positions on life satisfaction

The Growth of Aged Workers

– a projective view

- **The number of aged workforce will continue to grow till the baby boom generation reaches age 65 because of increased number of healthy, experienced and skillful aged workforce,**
- **Decreased number of youth workers,**
- **Political pressures from the aging population against mandatory retirement or for later retirement ages,**
- **Inadequate and insufficient retirement provident fund maintaining basic living standard of aged persons (Hartley & Biddle, 2001).**

Valuable Human Asset of Aged Workforce for HK

- Aged workers have many good qualities e.g.
- well-functioned cognition,
- hard work,
- reliable,
- loyalty,
- conscientious,
- strong work ethic,
- wealthy of knowledge, skills and experiences,
- having well-developed interpersonal skills,
- low score on absenteeism and turnover,
- as well as positive to safety

(Albrecht, 2001; Findley & Bennett, 2002; Siu, Phillips & Leung, 2002; Faculty of Occupational Medicine of the Royal College of Physicians, 2004).

LABOUR MARKET CHARACTERISTICS OF AGED WORKER IN HK



Aging Population – Labour force (‘000)[Labour force participation rate]

	2005 Q4	2009 Q4	2010 Q4
Age			
60-64	116.3 [11.05]	119.5 [34.4%]	128.4 [33.5%]
>=65		45.2 [5.4%]	53.4 [6.2%]

Industry of Employed Elderly

	2001		2006	
	長者 Older Persons	全港人口 Whole Population	長者 Older Persons	全港人口 Whole Population
Proportion of working population by industry (%)	15.1	12.3	13.0	9.7
製造業 Manufacturing	4.0	7.6	4.9	6.8
建造業 Construction	33.5	26.2	32.2	27.2
批發、零售、進出口貿易、飲食及酒店業 Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	8.0	11.3	10.4	11.6
運輸、倉庫及通訊業 Transport, storage and communications	16.9	16.1	16.7	17.0
金融、保險、地產及商用服務業 Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	20.5	25.5	21.6	26.9
社區、社會及個人服務業 Community, social and personal services	2.1	1.0	1.2	0.8
其他 ⁽⁴⁾ Others ⁽⁴⁾				

Occupation

	2001		2006	
	長者 Older Persons	全港人口 Whole Population	長者 Older Persons	全港人口 Whole Population
經理及行政人員 Managers and administrators	15.9	10.7	19.5	10.8
專業人員 Professionals	2.8	5.5	3.7	6.1
輔助專業人員 Associate professionals	5.1	15.3	6.7	16.1
文員 Clerks	6.6	16.3	7.9	16.9
服務工作及商業銷售人員 Service workers and shop sales workers	13.6	15.0	12.5	16.4
工藝及有關人員 Craft and related workers	8.2	9.9	8.6	8.5
機台及機器操作員及裝配員 Plant and machine operators and assemblers	7.0	7.3	7.7	6.2
非技術工人 Elementary occupations	39.5	19.5	32.5	18.8
漁農業熟練工人及不能分類的職業 Skilled agricultural and fishery workers; and occupations not classifiable	1.3	0.3	0.9	0.3

Monthly Income from Main Employment of Employed Elderly

每月主要職業收入 (港元)
Monthly Income from
Main Employment (HK\$)

	數目 Number	百分比 %
2006		
< 2,000	3 013	5.2
2,000 – 3,999	7 132	12.4
4,000 – 5,999	13 515	23.5
6,000 – 7,999	9 088	15.8
8,000 – 9,999	5 171	9.0
10,000 – 14,999	7 708	13.4
15,000 – 19,999	3 085	5.4
≥ 20,000	8 799	15.3
總計 Total	57 511	100.0
	6,500	

每月主要職業收入中位數 (港元)
Median monthly income from
main employment (HK\$)

Valuable Human Asset of Aged Workforce for HK

- Aged workers have many good qualities e.g.
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- hard work,
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Importance of Age Factor in Employment

- **Census and statistics Department (2009)
Thematic Household Survey Report No. 42**
- **It was conducted during December 2008 to February 2009 to collect views of Hong Kong residents on the importance of age factor in employment**
- **some 8 000 households were successfully enumerated, constituting a response rate of 75%**

Views on the **stability** of performance of relatively elder employees


Very stable	2.6%
Stable	54.6%
No difference as compared to those of other ages	30.6%
Unstable	10.6%
Very unstable	0.3%
No opinion	1.4%

Views on the **concentration** on work of relatively elder employees

Very high	2.8%
High	52.8%
No difference as compared to those of other ages	37.8%
Low	5.2%
Very low	0.1%
No opinion	1.3%

Main **criteria** considered by employers in employment

Working experience	37.9%
Educational, professional qualifications and related skills	33.8%
Work performance	10.0%
Work attitude	7.4%
Age	6.4%

The background of the slide features a pattern of overlapping autumn leaves in various shades of brown and orange, set against a darker brown gradient background.

**A Consultancy Study on
Occupational Health & Safety of
Aged Worker**

**commissioned by Occupational
Health & Safety Council**

Consultancy Team for OHSC

- Prof. Wong Hung
(Principal Investigator)
- Prof. Ignatius T. S. Yu
- Dr. P. W. Li &
- Dr. K. K. Chan

The Consultancy Study on Aged Workers

- **A cross-sectional territory wide quantitative surveys to review and identify the OSH issues facing aged workers in different industries;**
- **Qualitative Case study on 10 selected industries on implementation of the aged workers OSH management programme**
- **Formulate a prospective policy & strategy to meet the needs of aged workers**

Qualitative Survey – Case Study

- Most employers believed that the aged workers were suffering decline in physical condition and strength.
- In addition, they required more sick leaves on medical consultation with increased risk of illness and it was also difficult for them to manage heavy workload duties.

The Pros

- Nevertheless, some of the employers recognized that the workers aged over 50 were having better physical strength than the younger ones as they had less leisure activities and life stress.

Employers' comment

*“The aged workers are generally more humble, loyal, active and responsible. They have more work experience.” –
(Personal Services: Management of
massage service)*

“Aged workers are more devoted and willing to learn and work.” – (Social and Community Services: Management of security service)

“The aged workers are more considerate at work and the younger ones are only energetic.” – (Catering Industry: Worker)

Rich in life and work experience with good working attitude



- Even the aged workers were facing declining physical strength and condition, most of them **were rich in life and work experience, and had good working attitudes and were willing to learn.**
- Therefore, some employers were willing to employ aged workers.

Quantitative Telephone Survey

Total telephone
numbers contacted
= 23131



Successful interview
= 4870



Completed
Questionnaire
= 1126

Overall response rate = 41.7%

Different occupational hazards

- Many enterprises of various industries had employed aged workers, in particular, the community, social and personal services, the wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels, as well as, construction.
- Aged workers faced different occupational hazards in different industries and jobs.

Deterioration in the functioning

- Aged workers encountered deterioration in the functioning of the body which in turn brought them to major work challenges, including, **vision impairments, work stress, reduced memory, and reduced joint movement, reaction and dexterity, etc.**

Challenges encountered	Overall (%) (n=1126)
Vision impairments	73.7
Work stress	67.2
Memory reduced	59.3
Reduced joint movement, reaction and dexterity	56.8
Reduced work endurance	44.7
Worry about retirement arrangement	44.2
Attention span reduced	42.5
Income less than before	42.0
Hearing reduced	32.4
Unable to meet the job demand	28.9
Unclear career goal	21.7
Problems related to work system	20.8
Low education background	20.7
Inadequate skills	16.5
Age discrimination	14.8
Fair relationship with colleagues	7.2
Others	0.7

Occupation and industry rather than age were the keys



- Aged workers were vulnerable to physical, biological and ergonomic hazards.
- The characteristics of occupation and industry rather than age were the keys to explain hazardous working environment.

Occupation was the key

- Nature of occupation rather than age was also the key to explain **occupational injuries, musculoskeletal discomfort and severe work related injuries or discomfort.**
- A higher rate of challenges was observed among “elementary occupations” and “service workers and shop sales workers”.

Association between occupation and occupational injuries and work related discomfort

Injury on duty and work related discomfort	Percent (%)									Chi-square value	P value
	Managers and administrators	Professionals	Associate professionals	Clerks	Service workers and shop sales workers	Craft and related worker	Plant and machine operators and assemblers	Elementary occupations	Others		
Occupational injuries	5.8	9.1	14.5	9.5	17.5	13.8	15.8	21.3	9.1	23.64	0.003
Musculoskeletal discomfort	34.3	29.9	38.8	37.5	55.2	41.4	47.6	49.3	45.5	25.10	0.001
Severe work related injuries or discomfort	7.6	9.1	21.4	13.8	22.8	19.0	17.2	20.2	0.0	20.19	0.010

OSH conditions of aged workers

- The OSH conditions of aged workers could also be explained by
 - personal health
 - OSH awareness and
 - environmental factors.
- Individually, decline in health and lack of OSH education and training made an aged worker vulnerable to poor OSH conditions.

Environmental aspect

- In the environmental aspect, where a working environment that was not favorable to the changes in aging but requiring intensive physical strength, OSH problems were likely to happen.

Work shift and overnight

- The survey found that 14.2% and 12.9% of aged workers were required to work shift and overnight respectively.
- These findings were also similar to the aged working population in the European Union.

Female Aged Workers

- Higher rate of injury was observed if the aged workers were female, working for part time job, shift work and overnight work, they were more vulnerable to occupational injuries.
- Female aged workers with longer weekly working hours were also prone to work related “musculoskeletal discomfort”.

Work related “musculoskeletal discomfort”

- Work related “musculoskeletal discomfort” was reported by 43.4 aged workers in the past 6 months for every 100 respondents.
- Comparing with the aged workers of 15 European Union member states, higher percentage of aged workers in the present study were exposed to different ergonomic risk factors.

Work related injuries or illness did not increase with age

- **Results of the present study echoed with previous overseas studies that work related injuries or illness did not increase with age.**
- **This might be explained by the reason that aged workers were more experienced and more cautious so that accidents were less likely to happen.**

Conclusion

- Hong Kong is having an aging population, especially in the workforce. With good health and working ability, many aged workers still had the willingness and need to work.
- Aged workers had rich life and working experience as well as proficient skills; They also had positive working attitude and were hardworking and willing to learn.
- Aged workers were important assets to the enterprises.

Thank you!

