

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

Centre Annual Report

**Name of Centre / Institute:**

**THE HKJC CENTRE FOR SUICIDE RESEARCH AND PREVENTION**

**Period (July 1st to June 30th): July 1st, 2014 – June 30th, 2015**

**I. Mission**

Founded in 2002, The Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention (CSRП), in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Hong Kong has advocated the Public Health Approach in tackling suicide problems. We adhere to the promotion of community focused suicide prevention measures to further lower suicidal tendencies, all the while, advocating diagnosis and treatment intervention to individuals at risk. In this regard, suicide and its prevention is inherently a multi-disciplinary subject, requiring a diverse array of perspectives and expertise.

CSRП strives to understand and prevent suicide through research and education. A synergetic team of experts in psychiatry, psychology, social work, statistics and mathematics, together with networks within the community, our aim is to facilitate the development and implementation of multi-dimensional prevention practices through the use of innovative research designs and evaluation. We also dedicate ourselves to building a mentally healthy environment to vulnerable individuals impacted by suicide. CSRП also serves as a suicide trend surveillance centre and media outlet for the recommendation of strategic prevention plans. Training and workshops are also regularly provided for gatekeepers.

**II. Strategy (and its alignments with the Faculty strategy and Centre mission)**

The Faculty of Social Sciences strives for excellence in theoretical, applied and clinical research. And it is seen as a knowledge hub in the region of social sciences and members of the Faculty are encouraged to contribute their expertise to both public and private sectors as consultants or advisors. CSRП shares the same vision and objectives.

An advocate of the Public Health Approach, CSRП believes in not only intervention for suicidal individuals but also prevention of the risk factors and enhancing protective factors for the community at large. This cost-effective but high impact approach mobilises and empowers the community so that the mental well-being in general can be uplifted while making the entire population less susceptible to suicide. Besides, CSRП places a strong emphasis on identifying patterns of suicide and suicidal behaviours in a

group of populations. CSRP searches for evidence-based measures; particularly those involve improving environment to protect people against suicide and changing behaviours that put people at suicide risk.

CSRP has developed a number of yardsticks to be achieved in areas of research, training and knowledge exchange. They are:

1. Academic Publications
2. Research Studies
3. Forthcoming Projects
4. Knowledge exchange activities
5. Collaborations with renowned scholars, locally and internationally

### **III. Director's Reflection (1/2 page)**

#### **a. Performance in the last academic year**

The year of 2014/2015 is another exciting year for the HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention at the University of Hong Kong. Since establishment, we have adopted a public health approach towards suicide prevention in the community. Over the past year, CSRP has made significant achievements in understanding the causes of suicide and poverty in areas of research, knowledge dissemination and community services. Our Centre has been consulted by many local and international collaborators (including the WHO, South Korean Government, and the Macau Government) on suicide prevention.

Poverty Alleviation research: we have started the Chief Executive Community (CEC) project on poverty alleviation in Jan 2014 and the project will last for three years. We have made a number of submission on the Spatial analysis of poverty and the service provisions in these areas to the Commission of Poverty. The work has received much attention in the community and we have also submitted the results to international journals for publication.

Suicide Prevention: We have been invited to participate in the International Congress on Suicide Prevention and overseas conferences as keynote speakers. The World Health Organization has also invited us to take part in the write up of the World Suicide Report. The Centre's proposal of restriction of access to charcoal has been adopted in New Taipei City and has been found to be effective in reducing the number of suicides by charcoal. The director of the Centre is helping with the evaluation of this initiative. The work has been published in Public Library of Science in 2015 and is another one of evidence-based research produced in the Centre.

The researchers in Taiwan have been very appreciative of our support. We have also started the discussion with FACEBOOK, GOOGLE and other NGOs regarding how to make use of social media for suicide prevention.

Quality Thematic Network on Students' Well-being: Our Centre has been selected and funded by the Education Bureau as an education hub in conducting mental health research and training for the schools in Hong Kong from 2014-2019.

Injured worker research: The Federation of Insurers has also invited us to conduct a study on the mental well-being and recovery pathway analysis on injured workers. This study is about to complete and will give an overall insight of the barriers to returning to work for injured workers in Hong Kong

Academic publications: Eleven peer-reviewed papers have been published in the past academic year in BMJ, Social Science and Medicine etc. Most of them are in the high impact journals (equivalent to 3 or 4 stars paper). In addition, the mentoring program has been well received by the community. The Wharf and Lion Club have continuously provided support for the program especially in evaluating the effectiveness of the project. The CHOW TAI FOOK foundation has provided support for an altruism project hosted by the Centre.

These work demonstrated our commitment to strive for excellence in research and serve the community and our ability to achieve it. We feel very privileged to serve the local and international communities by identifying good practice models for suicide prevention. We are indeed very fortunate to be supported by private donors, foundations, and the Government in the past. We are also well advised by a group of esteemed international suicide researchers so that we can form a knowledge hub of suicide prevention practices and population health in Hong Kong.

#### b. Way forward

In 2014, the suicide rate was among the lowest observed in the past two decades (i.e. 12.5 per 100,000). However, suicide is still the 7th leading cause of death in the population and the leading cause of death among the youth of aged 15-29. The recent increase of suicide cases among youth and women aged 20-39 is worrying. Moreover, the number of suicide attempts and deliberate self-harm cases are estimated to be 10 to 50 times higher than the number of completed suicides. And it is causing tremendous cost to the health care system every year. We shall continue to take the lead in research, training and education especially in understanding the geographical difference of suicide deaths in the community. The aim of such is to better allocate the community resources for suicide prevention. Encouraging results have been obtained from the experience in the Northern District and we are ready to engage other communities for suicide prevention.

Furthermore, we have started to work on the second CEC project to examine the causes of poverty and how to mitigate poverty in the community for the period 2014-2017. We have also started the GIS mapping for the social problem in Hong Kong. The Centre will be dealing with BIG DATA for social and public policy which are essential for evidence-based program evaluation as well.

We shall continue to work on the CEC projects to improve our understanding on poverty and how we can help improve the situation by conducting relevant research.

Some initial findings on the spatial distribution have been identified and more work need to be done in understanding the match or mismatch of the community resources in alleviating poverty.

We are also making progress with the media in improving dissemination of news and social media content relating to suicides. We are going to hold some research and training workshop with media professionals using knowledge exchange research resources.

We are teaming up with the Rochester University and others for an e-learning mental health program for the region in application for a NIMH grant. Collaboration has also been established with the National Taiwan University and Melbourne University on the area of research in population health.

We shall take the lead, as always, in striving for a healthy work environment in Hong Kong such as maintaining work-life balance, cultivating social support from colleagues, and

promoting mental wellbeing. The appointment of Dr Emily Cheng as a research assistant professor in the Centre has been instrumental for the Centre's development. We have also been benefited by the support given by Dr Frances Law in taking the lead in some components of the poverty project. On the other hand, we will contribute to the collective wisdom locally and internationally and develop more evidence-based practice and intervention models for suicide prevention. Last but not least, we are thankful to have the support from the Faculty and the University in the past years, we appeal to you to provide continuous support for the Centre in its endeavors.

**IV. Output (at least one author must indicate Centre affiliation in paper and only those research outputs affiliated with the Centre/Programme could be listed, must not repeat publications listed in earlier reports)**

**a. Journals**

**2014-2015**

1. **Wong, P. W.**, Li, T. M., **Chan, M.**, **Law, Y. W.**, Chau, M., Cheng, C., **Yip, P. S.** (2015). The prevalence and correlates of severe social withdrawal (hikikomori) in Hong Kong: A cross-sectional telephone-based survey study. *Int J Soc Psychiatry*, 61(4), 330-342. doi: 10.1177/0020764014543711
2. Zhang, H., Fan, S., & **Yip, P. S.** (2015). Sexual dysfunction among reproductive-aged Chinese married women in Hong Kong: prevalence, risk factors, and associated consequences. *J Sex Med*, 12(3), 738-745. doi: 10.1111/jsm.12791
3. **Yip, P. S.**, Yousuf, S., **Chan, C. H.**, Yung, T., & Wu, K. C. (2015). The roles of culture and gender in the relationship between divorce and suicide risk: a meta-analysis. *Soc Sci Med*, 128, 87-94. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.12.034
4. **Law, Y. W.**, **Wong, P. W.**, & **Yip, P. S.** (2015). Health and psychosocial service use among suicides without psychiatric illness. *Soc Work*, 60(1), 65-74.
5. **Hsu, C. Y.**, **Chang, S. S.**, **Lee, E. S.**, & **Yip, P. S.** (2015). "Geography of suicide in Hong Kong: spatial patterning, and socioeconomic correlates and inequalities". *Soc Sci Med*, 130, 190-203. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2015.02.019
6. **Chang, S. S.**, Kwok, S. S., **Cheng, Q.**, **Yip, P. S.**, & Chen, Y. Y. (2015). The association of trends in charcoal-burning suicide with Google search and newspaper reporting in Taiwan: a time series analysis. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol*. doi: 10.1007/s00127-015-1057-7
7. **Chang, S. S.**, Steeg, S., Kapur, N., Webb, R. T., **Yip, P. S.**, & Cooper, J. (2015). Self-harm amongst people of Chinese origin versus White people living in England: a cohort study. *BMC Psychiatry*, 15, 79. doi: 10.1186/s12888-015-0467-0

8. **Chan, C. H.**, Caine, E. D., **Chang, S. S.**, Lee, W. J., Cha, E. S., & **Yip, P. S.** (2015). The impact of improving suicide death classification in South Korea: a comparison with Japan and Hong Kong. *PLoS One*, 10(5), e0125730. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0125730
9. Guan, L., Hao, B., Liu, T., **Cheng, Q.**, **Yip, P. S.**, & Zhu, T. (2015). [A pilot study of differences in behavioral and linguistic characteristics between Sina suicide microblog users and Sina microblog users without suicide idea]. *Zhonghua Liu Xing Bing Xue Za Zhi*, 36(5), 421-425.
10. Zhang, H., **Law, F. Y.**, Hu, D., Fan, S., & **Yip, P. S.** (2015). Profiles of higher earning wives in Hong Kong and the implications for marital satisfaction. *J Sex Marital Ther*, 41(5), 457-466. doi: 10.1080/0092623X.2014.920446
11. **Wong, P. W.**, Caine, E. D., Lee, C. K., Beautrais, A., & **Yip, P. S.** (2014). Suicides by jumping from a height in Hong Kong: a review of coroner court files. *Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol*, 49(2), 211-219. doi: 10.1007/s00127-013-0743-6
12. Guan, L., Hao, B., Liu, T., **Cheng, Q.**, **Yip, P. S.**, & Zhu, T. (2015). Behavioral and linguistic characteristics of microblog users with various suicide ideation level: an explanatory study. *Chinese Journal of Public Health*. 31(3):349-352.

**b. Books published or contracted**

1. Recommendations on Suicide Reporting and Online Information Dissemination for Media Professionals

**c. Book chapters**

**d. Conference papers**

1. 16th June – 20th June, 2015, Montreal, Canada. The XXVIII World Congress of International Association for Suicide Prevention
  - Responding to the Spread of Helium Suicides by Engaging Media: A Hong Kong Experience (Prof. Yip Paul SF)
  - The Association of Trends in Charcoal-Burning Suicide with Google Search and Newspaper Reporting in Taiwan: A Time Series Analysis (Dr. Shu-Sen Chang, Dr. Qijin Cheng and Prof. Yip Paul SF)
  - Communicating Charcoal Burning Suicide on Chinese Social Media (Dr. Qijin Cheng)
  - Suicide Contagion: A Systematic Review of Definitions and Research Utility (Dr. Qijin Cheng)
  - Care Pathway of Patients Surviving Self-Harm Episodes in Hong Kong. (Dr. Yik Wa Law)
  - Recent Trend of Incidence Rates of Hospital-Treated Self-Harm by Males in Hong Kong (Dr. Chi-Leung Kwok)
  - A Pilot Study of a Problem-Solving Skills Training and Mentorship Programme for Adolescents in Hong Kong (Ms. Suk Yee Lai)
  - The Effect of Improving Death Classification on the Rapid Increase of Suicide in South

Korea (Dr. Geoff Chee-Hon Chan)

- Suicides among Individuals Who Purchased Life Insurance Policy in Hong Kong (Dr. Geoff Chee-Hon Chan)
- Internal Migration and Suicide in South Korea from 1992-2012 (Dr. Geoff Chee-Hon Chan)
- How Do People with Self-Harm Behaviors and Suicide Survivors Engaged in the Social Services in the North District? (Ms. Carmen, Chui-shan LAI)
- A Multidisciplinary Programme to Care People with Suicide and Attempted Suicide in the Eastern District (Dr. Paul Wai-ching Wong and Ms. Carmen, Chui-shan Lai)
- Understanding Aborted Suicide Attempts: A Mixed-Methods Approach (Dr. Paul Wai-ching Wong)

**e. Public or consultancy reports**

1. Data Transformation and Related Services – Evaluation study for the Community Care Fund's programme to provide a one-off living subsidy for low-income households not living in public housing and not receiving CSSA
2. From Compensation to Rehabilitation – A social Review on Employees' Compensation Insurance System in Hong Kong

**f. Other intellectual property (including software, training materials, etc.)**

Nil

**V. Activities (must be active during the year, each project should highlight links to Centre strategy)**

- Consultancies
- Training

1. Public Policy Seminar - A "Latte Index" - A reflection of income disparity and social mobility (Funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club)
2. Public Policy Seminar - The benefits of public housing on household savings in Hong Kong (Funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club)
3. Public Policy Seminar - Who is happier in Hong Kong: Those earning more or giving more? (Funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club)
4. Public Policy Seminar - Poverty and well-being in Hong Kong: A spatial analysis (Funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club)

- Research projects

i) List of all research projects

Project Title	Name of Project Holder	Project Start Date	Amount	Funding Source
Knowledge Exchange	CSRP	2014-2015	85,000	KE
KidMatters, a Web and School-based Approach to Mental Health Promotion and Wellbeing of Children in Primary School <i>* Appendix 1</i>	CSRP	2013-2015	2,715,700	QEF

Thematic Network on Developing Students' Positive Attitudes and Values	CSRP	2015-2016	2,324,000	QEF
Determinants of poverty and potential interventions to alleviate poverty in Hong Kong <i>* Appendix 2 &amp; 3</i>	CSRP	2014-2016	14,620,000	HKJC Charities Trust
Community-based suicide prevention project in North district (supported by SWD)	CSRP	2011-2015	5,139,000	Lotteries Fund
Evaluation study of three pilot cyber youth outreaching project (SWD)	CSRP	2011-2015	951,000	Lotteries Fund
One Hundred Years of Suicide in Taiwan	CSRP	2013-2015	405,600	Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation
A study on altruism index in Hong Kong	CSRP	March - July. 2014	230,000	HKSAR Government
Monitor online spreading of an emerging suicide method (charcoal burning) in Mainland China.	CSRP	2014-2015	52,387	Small Project Funding
Suicide and self-harm amongst Chinese migrants	CSRP	2014-2015	59,900	Seed Funding
An evaluation study for Project WeCan	CSRP	2014-2015	400,000	Wharf
Real-Time Monitoring of the Online Dissemination of Novel Suicide Methods	CSRP	2014-2016	193,752	University of Rochester
A study on the demographics of older adults in Hong Kong	CSRP	April - June.2015	200,000	HKJC Charities Trust
Assessing the socioeconomic costs of drug abuse in Hong Kong SAR	CSRP	2015-2016	1,807,871.3	Beat Drugs Fund

ii) List of all collaborative projects

Project Title	Name of Project Holder	Name of Collaborator	Project Start Date
Nil			

iii) List of all pro-bono projects

Period	Project Title	Nature (i.e. research or consultancy)
Nil		

- Conferences organized
  - Sept 10, 2014 World Suicide Prevention Day Press Conference

- Relationships formed with organizations  
Nil

#### **VI. Teaching (excluding that credited to departments)**

- Undergraduate courses  
Nil
- Taught Masters courses  
Nil
- Research students (including list of current students and completed )  
Nil

#### **VII. Collaborations**

- University level (within HKU)
  - Department of Social Work and Social Administration
  - Journalism and Media Studies Centre
  - School of Business
  - School of Public Health
- Community level
  - Coroner Court
  - Department of Health, Hong Kong SAR
  - Education Bureau
  - Family Court
  - Health, Welfare and Food Bureau, Hong Kong SAR
  - Hong Kong Police Force
  - The Hong Kong Federation of Youth Group
  - The Samaritans Befrienders Hong Kong
  - Suicide Prevention Service
- Regional level
  - National Taiwan University
  - National Singapore University
  - Ministry of Education of Singapore Government
  - Institute of Psychology, Chinese Academy of Sciences
- International level
  - Center for the Study and Prevention of Suicide, University of Rochester Medical Centre, USA
  - Center for Suicide Research, The University of Oxford, UK
  - Australian Institute for Suicide Research and Prevention (AISRAP), Griffith University, Australia
  - The Christchurch School of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of OTAGO, New Zealand

- Department of Social Medicine, Harvard Medical School
- Suicidal Behaviour in China, Beijing Hui Long Guan Hospital, Ministry of Health, Peking University, PRC
- International Association of Suicide Prevention, IASP
- World Health Organization, WHO
- South Korean Government
- Macau Government

\* Appendix 1

**KidMatters, a web and school-based mental health promotion programme for primary school children**

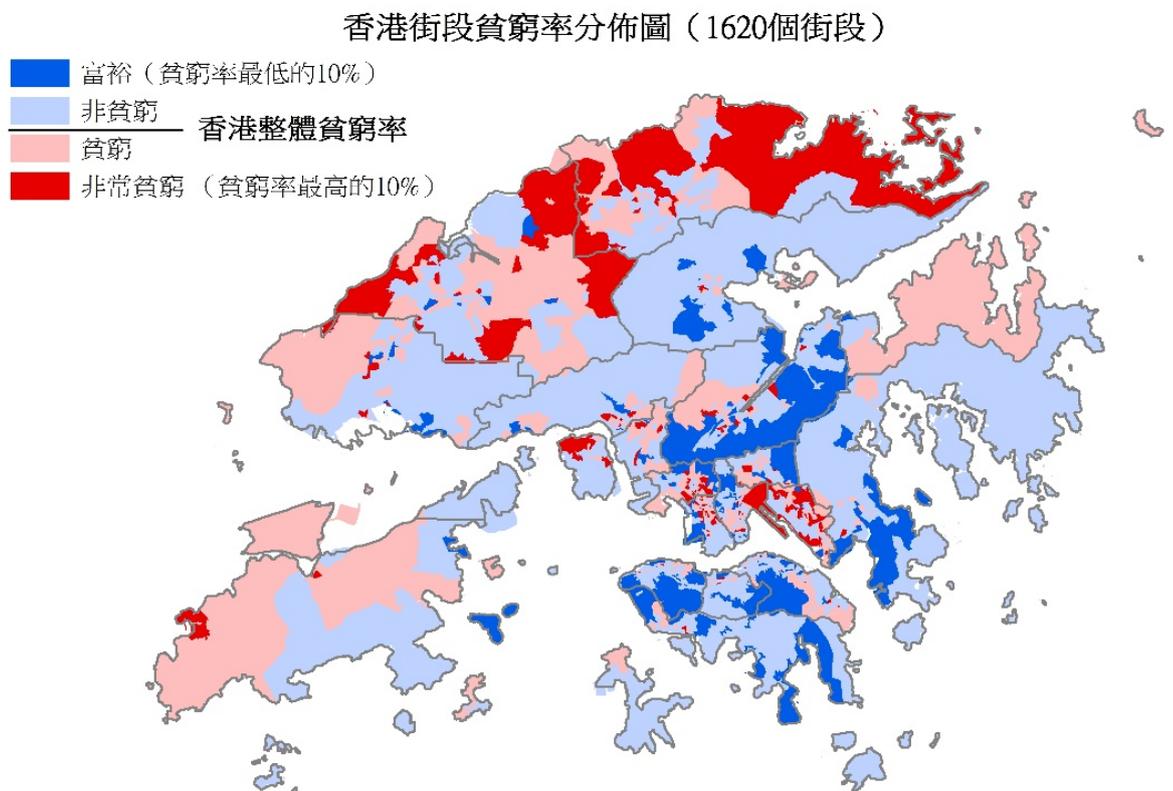


## \*Appendix 2

### Determinants of poverty and potential interventions to alleviate poverty in Hong Kong.

#### The distribution of poverty rates across large street blocks (LSB) in Hong Kong.

We divided the 1620 Hong Kong large street blocks into 4 groups according to their poverty rates (Figure 1): extremely poor (10% street blocks with the highest poverty rates, in red), poor (street blocks with a poverty rate above the whole Hong Kong poverty rate, in light red), non-poor (street blocks with a poverty rate below the whole Hong Kong poverty rate, in light blue), and rich (10% street blocks with the lowest poverty rate, in blue).



根據香港2011年人口普查資料

### \* Appendix 3

## Determinants of poverty and potential interventions to alleviate poverty in Hong Kong.

### The 7 clusters of poverty in Hong Kong.

Using spatial cluster analysis, we identified the below 7 spatial clusters of poverty in Hong Kong –

1. Kwun Tong to Mid-Wong Tai Sin and Kowloon City South cluster;
2. Kwai Tsing North to Tsuen Wan South cluster;
3. Yuen Long North West cluster;
4. Shum Shui Po South to Yau Tsim Mong North cluster;
5. Mid-Tuen Mun cluster;
6. Yuen Long North East to North district North West cluster; and
7. Tung Chung cluster.

