



Press release

For immediate release

“Connect the Disconnected”
The University of Hong Kong
The Hong Kong Jockey Club Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention
releases the latest figures and prevention recommendations on suicide

Everyone can make a difference in suicide prevention by working together. World Suicide Prevention day is observed on September 10 by the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP) each year. As a member of the IASP, the HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention (CSRP) of the University of Hong Kong holds a press conference today with the theme “Connect the Disconnected” to release the latest suicide figures in Hong Kong and also to feature CSRP’s event - “Cross-generational Love and Care” Video Campaign, to share the campaign outcome.

Latest Suicide Figures

With the data extracted from the Coroner’s Court, CSRP estimated that the suicide rate¹ in Hong Kong was 13.0 in 2019, higher than 12.3 in 2018. To enable valid comparison of suicide rates among different regions, suicide rates are often standardized and adjusted according to the age structure of the world population. Since the aging phenomenon in Hong Kong is more serious than other regions, after adjustment of the suicide rate, the age-standardized suicide rate in Hong Kong was estimated at 9.7 in 2019, lower than the global rate of 10.5 for 2016 (World Health Organization, 2018).

The suicide rate of male has been consistently higher than female from 1997 to the estimated number in 2019 by approximately a fold higher. Regardless of gender, the estimated 13.0 in 2019 is a slight increase from 12.3 in 2018. The elderly population has been the highest among different age groups throughout the years. Amongst the elderly population, the suicide rate of men aged 60 or above rose to 30.7, the highest since 2014, while the suicide rate of women aged 60 or above has a downward trend. On the other hand, the suicide rate of children aged below 15 maintained at a low level of 0.8 in the past four years.

In recent years, youth suicides have become a heightened concern in society. The suicide rate of 15-24 year olds rose from 8.3 in 2012 to 10.4 in 2017. The suicide rate

¹ All suicide rates are calculated as per 100,000 people. Taking the overall suicide rate in 2018 (12.2) as example, it means there were 12.2 per 100,000 people in Hong Kong died by suicide.

of adolescents in 2019 continued the declining trend in 2018 and fell to an estimated 8.3. The suicide rate in the 25-39 age group rose from a historical low of 10.5 in 2018 to 11.8 in 2019.

The rising number of student suicide cases and the complexity of suicide is of concern to society and Prof Yip has called on each member of the society to work together in suicide prevention to nurturing the future of Hong Kong. Our CSRP is collaborating with non-government organizations to provide new service for youth in need of online-crisis support.

“Cross-generational Love and Care” Video Campaign

Mental wellness of elderly has always been one of our concerns. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, residents in care homes for the aged could not meet with their families. This might arouse their feelings of loneliness and induce negative emotions. Hence, the CSRP, supported by the Community Partner Foundation, launched the “Cross-generational Love & Care” project in May 2020. A video campaign was organized and invited children aged 2 – 8 from local kindergartens and primary schools to produce short clips to show their care to elderly living in care homes. Through this campaign, children and their parents were given an opportunity to work together to do charity and express to their love, care and respect to elderly in the community. Moreover, children could learn to express love and care and development a caring heart through field experience and spread positive messages to the community during the pandemic.

The video campaign collected approximately 100 video submissions of children from 45 local kindergartens and primary schools. Content varied from parent-child cooking, handcrafting, singing and dancing, to magic shows, instrument-playing, and exercising, which were full of creativity. After the first round of screening, 20 videos were selected to enter the final round. This best 20 videos were delivered to participating care homes for screening as to bring joy and happiness to the residents, and to make them feel being loved and cared by the community. Our judging panel, composed of representatives from various NGOs and professions from ageing, selected 5 groups of participants as final winners for the Merit Awards including “The Most Heart-warming Video”, “The Most Entertaining Video”, “The Most Attractive Video” and “The Most Creative Video”.

Winners of “The Most Creative Video Award” were Tsang’s brothers of Grade 4 and

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K2 from St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School and Sheng Kung Hui Kindergarten respectively. Their parent said, “my children were given a chance to care for people who are in need and express respect to elderly through this campaign. They both felt happy and enjoyed when taking the video. Hope this happiness could be brought to the elderly.” “The project is very meaningful,” said Ms. Kam, social worker from Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Home of Loving Care for the Elderly, one of the participating care homes, “the elderly were very happy when they watched the children performing in the videos!”

Besides, the project aims to invite winning teams and their parents for visits to care homes after the pandemic. Through face-to-face interactions, children can express their love and care for the elderly. At the same time, elderly are provided with a platform to share their precious life stories and experience to the next generation.

About the HKJC Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention (CSRP), HKU

Founded in 2002, CSRP has established its worldwide reputation in suicide research and prevention and extended its scope of research to the well-being of individuals as well as the whole society. CSRP believes that empirical research would optimize practices and contribute to the improvement of a society.

This press release, the PowerPoint and the photos for the press conference can be downloaded from the following website after 16:00, September 10, 2020:

<http://csrp.hku.hk/wspd2020/>

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