

S16 - Baby Boomer at the Gate: Creating a Path to Healthy and Productive Aging Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

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Introduction and Project Objectives: Aging of the baby boomers sets the 'silver tsunami' to hit the health and social care service in the next decades. Preparing this age cohort for healthy, engaging and productive aging is a highly prioritized public health agenda. Unlike their predecessors, the higher computer literacy and health consciousness of this cohort urges for a unique internet-based health promotion strategy. This project aimed to develop and launch an information and communication (ICT) platform titled "Path to Vitality and Vibrancy (PathVV)" to serve this purpose.

Method/Implementation: This was a collaborative project between a tertiary institution and a non-government organization. Underpinned by the Rown and Kahn's Model of Successful Aging, the PathVV emphasis on not only disease and disability prevention, but also functional optimization and active social engagement. Fifteen health themes were developed by a multi-disciplinary working group accordingly, with the content based on the up-to-date scientific evidence. For each theme, a road map guided the users from self-initiated health assessment, problem recognition, risk factor modification, to problem management. The users could register for the chatroom of each health theme, on which they could have continuous dialogues with a registered nurse and other users on the related health topics. Regular face-to-face activities were scheduled based on the hot topic discussed on the chatroom, and the active users were also offered with opportunities to serve as a volunteer for the elderly service.

Results/Outcomes: The PathVV has formally launched since Oct 2016. A total of 16,679 participants have visited the educative content and the number of hits for the 15 topics ranged from 1,712 to 4,453. Of which, 815 have registered for the interactive chat rooms, and sixteen face-to-face workshops were organized for health empowerment. The users had significant improvement in knowledge towards aging ($p < 0.001$), and mental health ($p = 0.006$) after the 6-month participation. A high level of satisfaction was reported. Focus group interview indicated that the PathVV was a unique and comprehensive health promotion strategy to empower self-directed health monitoring and promotion. The chatroom was regarded as a highly important alternative to supplement the heavily loaded health service for health education.

Conclusions: This project has built a substantial community capacity to support the effective transition of baby boomers to old age. It sets the foundation for building a more innovative volunteer training programme to prepare the baby boomers with more advanced health skills in supporting the socially deprived older adults in Hong Kong.

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