

## **PolyU CPCE Health Conference 2016 Assembles International Experts to Discuss Aging and Healthcare Issues**

School of Professional Education and Executive Development (SPEED) and Hong Kong Community College (HKCC), the educational units of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)-affiliated College of Professional and Continuing Education (CPCE) held the CPCE Health Conference 2016 (<http://healthconf2016.cpce-polyu.edu.hk>) on PolyU Hung Hom Bay Campus on 11 January 2016.

With the support and sponsorship from 15 organisations in the tertiary education and healthcare sectors, the Conference gathered over 30 academics and experts from the United Kingdom, Canada, Thailand, Malaysia, the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau to present their research papers. Prof. Sophia Chan, JP, the Under Secretary for Food and Health of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), officiated at the opening ceremony, together with PolyU President Prof. Timothy W. Tong.



The officiating guests, Prof. Sophia Chan (centre), JP, the Under Secretary for Food and Health of the HKSAR Government, Prof. Timothy W. Tong (2<sup>nd</sup> from left), PolyU President, were joined by the three Keynote Speakers, Prof. Sir James A. Mirrlees (left), Nobel Laureate, Master of Morningside College and Distinguished Professor-at-Large, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Prof. Kenneth Lee (2<sup>nd</sup> from right), Head, School of Pharmacy, Monash University Malaysia, and Prof. Peter P. Yuen (right), Dean of PolyU CPCE, at the CPCE Health Conference 2016.

Prof. Sir James A. Mirrlees, Nobel Laureate, Master of Morningside College and Distinguished Professor-at-Large, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, delivered a keynote address on “The Future Cost of Health and Care”. Prof. Kenneth Lee, Head, School of Pharmacy, Monash University Malaysia, delivered a keynote speech on “The Use of Health Economic Data in Maximising Health Outcomes - a Global Perspective”. Prof. Peter P. Yuen, Dean of PolyU CPCE cum the Conference Chair, delivered a keynote speech on “Reforming Hospital Care Financing in Hong Kong: Everyone a Private Patient”.

Generating insights, dialogue and future collaboration on various aging and healthcare issues were the main objectives of the Conference on “Aging, Health and Long Term Care – Integrity, Innovation and Sustainability”. The Conference attracted a packed audience of over 350 healthcare professionals, academics and students.



The officiating guests and keynote speakers took a photo with the Organising Committee members and the representatives of the Associate and Supporting Organisations of CPCE Health Conference 2016.

While the aging population has aroused a global concern on various healthcare issues, Hong Kong has one of the fastest aging populations on the planet. “Hong Kong needs to find ways to ensure that its highly utilised public healthcare system will continue to deliver quality services, with higher financial and operational efficiency, in a sustainable manner”, said Prof. Yuen in his keynote speech.

“Hong Kong is going to experience one of the fastest rates of aging population growth in the world. However, we are not adequately prepared to deal with the impending rise in healthcare costs including long-term care and nursing home needs,” noted Prof. Yuen, who added that as Hong Kong’s population ages as a result of lower birthrates and increased life expectancy, the proportion of medical services that the aged consume will rise significantly. “International studies indicate that, on average, a one per cent rise in the elderly population would result in a four per cent increase in healthcare costs.” Hong Kong therefore needs to take a more holistic approach to address the healthcare needs of an aging population. More emphasis should be placed on outpatient care, patient education and health promotion.



Prof. Peter Yuen delivered a keynote speech on “Reforming Hospital Care Financing in Hong Kong: Everyone a Private Patient”.

Prof. Yuen said Hong Kong’s main health problems are gradually evolving from infectious diseases to chronic diseases, such as diabetes, stroke, cancer, heart disease and elderly care. “Healthcare services have to be delivered in a more innovative, cost-effective and user-friendly manner,” said Prof. Yuen. To meet these needs, the health studies programmes offered by PolyU

SPEED and HKCC are designed to provide students with a diverse range of skills to work in the areas of healthcare and long-term care in both community and institutional settings.

Based on a review of the publicly-funded healthcare service, Prof. Yuen said the HK\$47 billion provided to the Hospital Authority could feasibly be used to provide the entire Hong Kong population with private healthcare coverage. “The proposed scheme, involving collaborations with insurance companies as well as public and private medical facilities, should lead to a more patient-centred healthcare system,” said Prof. Yuen.



International healthcare professionals, academics and students gathered at CPCE Health Conference 2016.

In his welcoming remarks PolyU President Prof. Timothy W. Tong put forth a thought-provoking question: whether Hong Kong’s elderly would be a burden to society or an asset benefiting the community with their knowledge and experience. He urged the community to explore the various possibilities now in order to be better prepared for the future. “Today, 14 per cent of the population is over the age of 65, but this is expected to rise to 30 per cent over the next 25 years,” said President Tong, who believes PolyU’s interdisciplinary academic programmes and research can help Hong Kong meet the challenges of aging population.

Describing the Conference as “important, timely and meaningful”, the officiating guest Prof. Sophia Chan, Under Secretary for Food and Health, said that similar to other advanced economies, Hong Kong is facing the challenges of an aging population, increasing healthcare costs with advances in medical technologies and growing expectations of the population. “Confronted by these challenges, the Hong Kong Government is committed to maintaining a balanced and sustainable development of the healthcare system,” said Prof. Chan, who added that the government would look for more ways to balance public and private healthcare sectors while expanding, renovating and building hospitals.



Prof. Sir James Mirrlees, Nobel Laureate, delivered a keynote address on “The Future Cost of Health and Care”.

Offering a slightly different view, Prof. Sir James Mirrlees, Nobel Laureate, suggested that Hong Kong is not so much facing an elderly problem as an aging problem. He interpreted that if the claim that most medical expenditures arise in the last stage of life is true, health expenditures would be related to the number dying, not the number who are old. He explained his interpretation offers an alternative concept that could lead to different solutions to address the issue. Meanwhile, fellow Keynote Speaker Prof. Kenneth Lee outlined how the use of economic data is maximising the benefits of pharmaceuticals. “Economic data can be used not only to better understand costs but developed for price negotiations with the pharmaceutical companies and access the wider impact of pharmaceuticals in a community,” Prof. Lee told the audience.



Prof. Kenneth Lee delivered a keynote speech on the topic of “The Use of Health Economic Data in Maximising Health Outcomes - a Global Perspective”.

As part of the Conference, a series of six parallel sessions covered 34 topics on aging and healthcare, including “The International Medical Tourism and Wellness”, “Innovative Primary Care”, “Performance Measurement and Management for Healthcare Organisations”, “Long Term Care and Rehabilitation”, “Healthcare Reform and Sustainability”, and “Innovation and Higher Education in Healthcare”.

Prof. Hanqin Qiu from PolyU School of Hotel and Tourism Management reported the most recent development of medical tourism in Asia and the potential challenges faced by the medical tourism development in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, Dr Deniz Kucukusta from the same School said research shows factors such as cultural differences, possible language problems, strict

regulations and difficulty in follow-up with patients may be some of the barriers influencing the development of medical tourism in Hong Kong.

Dr Ben Fong, Senior Lecturer of PolyU SPEED cum the Chair of Organising Committee of the Conference, shared in the parallel sessions that some merits of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in Healthcare in Hong Kong include utilising the skills, experience, access to technology and innovation of the private sector for better delivery of public services, and enhancing unity of responsibilities for delivering services. However, potential problems of PPPs are unreliable levels of service, and greater secrecy and lack of transparency resulting in benefits not being shared with the public agency. Dr Fong concluded that PPPs in healthcare are expected to redress the imbalance between the public and private sectors with improvement in the quality of care, better use of the resources, enhanced training, sharing of experience and expertise, and ultimately helping to ensure sustainability of the healthcare system.



Dr Ben Fong presented the topic of “Public Private Partnerships in Healthcare in Hong Kong - What are the Effective Strategies?” in one of the Parallel Sessions.