Appendix B

Report on preferences of caregivers of family members with dementia towards E-learning programme

Introduction
Hong Kong population is facing the problem of progressive ageing. On one hand, elderly people are living much longer due to advancements in medical technology. On the other hand, as one ages, the chance of getting dementia is increasing. According to a research conducted by The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2006, it was estimated that about one in ten elderly people aged 70 or above was found to suffer from dementia in Hong Kong. Dementia is a degenerative brain disease with progressive loss of cognitive functions and mobility. Caregivers of demented persons are facing severe obstruction and stress, which pose major challenges to their daily life. The current scope of service for caregivers of demented person is relatively narrow, with majority of them aim at enhancing the knowledge and skills of the caregivers or resources link up. Besides, caregivers often have to approach the service provider in-person or use the service there. Caregivers may not be able to use the service as a result of time constrains, transportation issues, and inability to find replacements to take care of the demented persons during their study.

In order to explore a more convenient, accessible and effective way of helping caregivers of demented persons, Jockey Club Centre for Positive Ageing (JCCPA) has conducted a survey to investigate their demographic background, stressfulness, as well as their attitude and preferences on online dementia-related education (dementia E-learning) programme.

Method
The survey was conducted between June 2011 to January 2012. Through the JCCPA website or talks organized by JCCPA, respondents were requested to complete a short self-constructed questionnaire (either online or paper-format). The main intention was to identify the willingness, preferences and expectations of family caregivers of demented persons on dementia E-learning programme. Two hundred and seventy-nine caregivers (174 or 62.4% of them completed online questionnaire) have responded to this survey.

Findings
1. Perception of caregiving stress
Nearly 90% of the respondents reported to experience caregiving stress after talking up the caring responsibility concerning their demented family member. More importantly, frequent episodes of caregiving stress occurred in about half of them. This highlights the severity of caregiving stress among caregivers of demented persons. This problem may deteriorate if it is not tackled properly.

2. Willingness to participate dementia E-learning programme

Around 80% of the respondents were or might willing to take part in dementia E-learning programme (Over 40% of the respondents were willing to join dementia E-learning programme while near 40% of the respondents had the tendency to be participants, Table 1). This indicates there is a great demand to develop E-learning platform for the general public to acquire dementia-related information, particularly the caregivers of demented persons.

3. Profile of potential dementia E-learning programme participants

Among those respondents who have indicated their preference on dementia E-learning programme over the other means, they were found to be more likely to have the following characteristics:

- Second or third generation of the family i.e. children or grandchildren of the demented persons
- Not being major caregiver
- With assistance from various sources (mainly full-time workers or relatives, Figure 1)
- Willing to get access to online dementia-related information
- Relatively younger in age of below 60
- Relatively higher education level of senior secondary or above
- With working experience (either currently working full-time, unemployed or retired)
- Having regular web surfing habit of at least 1 hour per day

Caregivers possessing the above profile will potentially participate dementia E-learning programme and thus should be regarded as the immediate target audience if any dementia E-learning programme is going to be developed. Therefore, their preferences and expectations on the programme ought to be investigated in order to have better understanding on their concerns and needs.
4. Preferences and expectations on dementia E-learning programme
Among those who preferred E-learning over attending conventional training classes, the major reasons were suggested to be convenience as well as flexibility in study content (Figure 2). Moreover, people expected to achieve a wide spectrum of learning goals from the dementia E-learning programme e.g. identifying community resources, delaying dementia progression, setting up long-term caring plan, improving understanding and communication, handling behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD), etc (Figure 3).

Conclusion and recommendations
As a result of the genuine need for dementia E-learning resources for caregivers of demented persons, online Chinese-medium supporting and educational platform will be meaningful for providing professional dementia-related knowledge as well as stress and emotional management to them. To our knowledge, Hong Kong is currently lacking such important resources and its availability will surely deliver useful but yet convenient-to-acquire and flexible content to caregivers of demented persons. It is our vision that through delivering better assistance to those caregivers in need, higher quality of caring can be ultimately received by the demented persons. By and large, this will be beneficial to not only the confined group of dementia families, not also the whole society as well.
**Attachments**

Table 1. Willingness to dementia E-learning programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>受訪者總數 (Total number of respondents)</th>
<th>數目 (Count)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>須意參與腦退化症的網上學習課程 (Willing to join dementia E-learning programme)</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不願意參與腦退化症的網上學習課程 (Not willing to join dementia E-learning programme)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>可能參與 (Maybe)</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>37.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>沒有披露 (Not disclosed)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Sources of assistance for caregivers
Figure 2. Reasons for preferring dementia E-learning programme

- 需要照顾家中长者 (Need to stay home for care taking) - 44.6%
- 方便 (Convenience) - 24.2%
- 不须外出 (No need to travel) - 17.2%
- 訪程內容靈活 (Flexible study content) - 11.8%
- 其它 (Others) - 2.2%

Figure 3. Expected goals for joining dementia E-learning programme

- 處理患者的行为及心理症状 (Handling BPSD) - 25.7%
- 加强与患者的理解和沟通能力 (Improving understanding and communication) - 18.8%
- 計劃長期照顧方案 (Setting up long-term caring plan) - 17.8%
- 搞懂腦退化病症 (Delaying dementia progression) - 16.2%
- 識別社區資源 (Identifying community resources) - 10.0%
- 減輕照顧者的壓力 (Alleviating caregiver stress) - 8.8%
- 加強患者的理解能力 (Improving patient understanding) - 0.2%