Public Attitude toward the Chinese Translation of Dementia in Hong Kong

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Introduction

- Chi-dai-zheng (痴呆症), which translated as “idiotic and dull-witted disease”, was the Chinese name of dementia in Hong Kong.
- This name describes the phenomenon of late stage dementia, but does not capture symptoms at the early stage.
- The negative connotations invoked by this name unfairly stereotype and stigmatize persons living with dementia.
- Patients and their families may therefore be reluctant to report symptoms, delaying diagnosis and interventions.
- The social stigma may also aggravate the psychological stress and burden of family caregivers.

Objectives

1. To examine the public attitudes and understanding of the term towards chi-dai-zheng (痴呆症).
2. To observe the change in attitude by a brief description of early symptoms of dementia.

Method

- The Asia Pacific Research Centre of the Chinese University of Hong Kong was commissioned to conduct a phone survey in March 2010.
- Phone numbers were randomly selected from the local telephone directory, with the last two digits of the number randomized.
- Survey divided into two parts: 1) Questions on Chinese name of dementia, 2) An intervention by providing a brief accurate description of early dementia.

Results

Demographics

- Eligible respondents: 1,001 (female: 55.8%, sampling deviation ± 3.10%)
- Age range: 40 - 59 (47%)
- Response rate: 49%

Perceived meaning of chi-dai-zheng

- 97% had heard the disease chi-dai-zheng.
- 54% believed dementia patients behave as what chi-dai-zheng describes.
- 38% believed chi-dai-zheng happens to elderly only.
- 50% thought the name chi-dai-zheng is stigmatizing.

Discussion and Conclusion

- Almost all respondents were aware of chi-dai-zheng (痴呆症).
- Half of respondents thought people with dementia were 痴呆 (idiotic and dull-witted).
- Respondents who had experience of people with dementia were more likely to want to rename dementia.
- After knowing the early symptoms, more respondents (with and without the experience) wanted to rename dementia chi-dai-zheng (痴呆症).

New Chinese Name of Dementia in Hong Kong – 腦退化症

- JCCPA launched the dementia renaming campaign in April 2010, in order to come up with a new Chinese name. The objectives of the campaign were to arouse public awareness about the disease, to reduce social stigma, and to promote a positive attitude toward dementia.
- The selection criteria were as follows: 1) Reveal characteristics of dementia 2) Convey positive message 3) Easy to understand and to remember and 4) Creative.
- Out of a few hundred names from 1,300 applicants, the selection panel and the supporting organizations selected nao-tui-huo-zheng (腦退化症).
- Nao-tui-huo-zheng (腦退化症) will be used by more than 28 Hong Kong government departments, medical and non-profit organizations.