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Jockey Club Centre for Positive Ageing



# Misconception about Dementia and its Effects on Treatment Seeking Tendency: A Study on Hong Kong Chinese

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# Dementia

- A progressive condition with community-wide impact (Gallo et al., 1991)
- Early diagnosis → medical, social, emotional and psychological benefits (Audit Commission, 2000). However, the disease remains under-detected (O'Connor et al., 1988).
- Attitudes of the patients and their family members may have important implications (Haley et al., 1992).



# Objectives

- It is the aim of the present study to investigate misconceptions about dementia in Hong Kong.
- Objectives of the present study :
  - To explore the prevalence of misconceptions about dementia
  - To unearth factors predictive of such misconceptions, and
  - To examine the effects of dementia related misconceptions on participants' treatment seeking tendency



# Method

- **Participants**

- 1002 Hong Kong people (433 males and 569 females)
- Response rate = 53.8%
- Age ranged from 18 to 64
- Most attained secondary level of education (58.7%) and near one third (28%) graduated from diploma or degree programs.



# Method

- **Instruments**
  - Demographic variables - age, gender, education level, any demented relative
  - Perceived prevalence of dementia. prevalence of dementia among elderly persons age 80 or above in Hong Kong.
  - Self-constructed items were used to assess participants' Misconception about dementia and Treatment seeking tendency
- The Asia Pacific Research Centre was commissioned to conduct the present survey



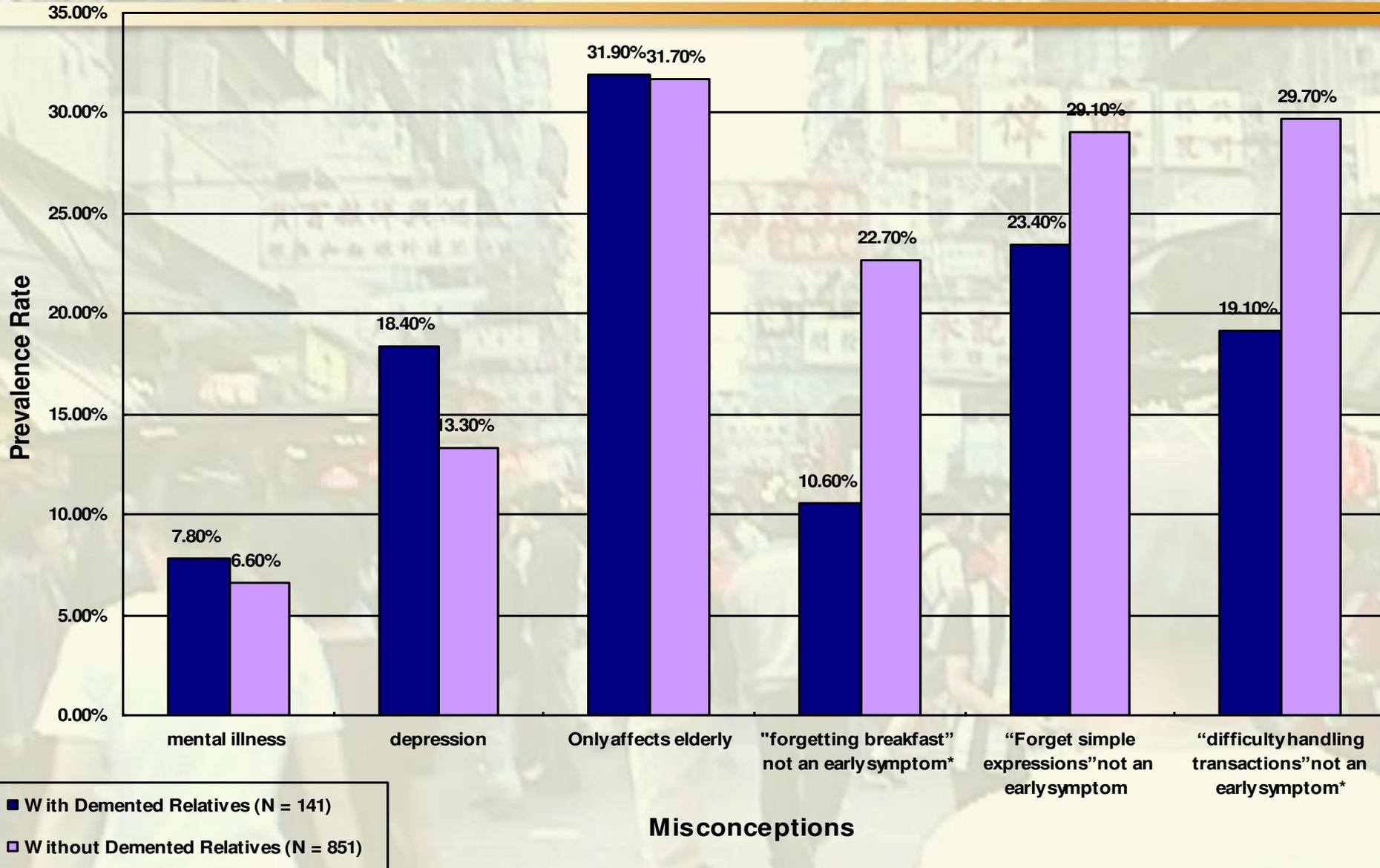
# Results

- 14% indicated that they had close relatives affected by dementia at the time of the study.
- **Misconceptions about Dementia**
  - 91% endorsed at least one misconception about dementia, and 37% endorsed three or more.
  - Participants who had demented relatives reported significantly fewer misconceptions than those who didn't ( $t=2.381, p<.05$ ).



# Results

- **Misconceptions about Dementia**
  - Participants who had demented relatives were more likely to identify “forgetting breakfast” (Chi square = 11.52  $p < .001$ ) and “having difficulty managing financial transactions” (Chi square = 6.92  $p < .01$ ) as early symptoms of dementia





# Misconceptions about Dementia

	Predictors	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.
Same as insanity / mental illness	Male Gender	1.74	1.04 / 2.90
Same as depression	Higher Education Level	.73	.59 / .90
Only elderly persons are affected	Older Age	1.36	1.21 / 1.52
“Being able to remember what happened 20 years ago, yet forget what one had for breakfast” is not an early symptom	Male Gender	1.83	1.33 / 2.51
	Demented Relative	.400	.23 / .70
“Forget simple expressions” is not an early symptom	Older Age	.81	.72 / .90
“Have difficulty handling financial transactions” is not an early symptom	Older Age	.73	.65 / .81
	Demented Relative	.57	.36 / .90



# Results

- **Treatment Seeking Tendency**
  - 13.3% would not seek treatment anyone of the depicted situations
  - 39.7% would seek treatment in only one of the depicted situations
  - No difference observed between participants who had demented relatives and those who didn't ( $p > .05$ )



# Seeking Medical Treatment in Anyone of the Scenarios

	With Demented Relatives (N = 141)	Without Demented Relatives (N = 851)	Total (N = 1002)
Excreting everywhere	76.6%	71.2%	71.8%
Being able to remember what happened 20 years ago, yet forget what one had for breakfast	51.1%	46.3%	47.0%
Have difficulty handling financial transactions	50.4%	43.4%	44.3%
Forget simple expressions	41.1%	37.0%	37.6%
Seek treatment in any of the above situations	28.4%	21.4%	22.3%
Seek treatment in none of the above situations	9.2%	14.0%	13.3%



# Results

- **Treatment Seeking Tendency**
  - Logistic Regression: perceived prevalence and misconceptions about dementia as predictors
  - Seeking treatment in any one of the depicted scenarios is predicted by participants' misconceptions about dementia (OR = .71, 95% CI .62 & .80)



# Discussion

- **Implications**

- Public education programs aiming at increasing the general public's awareness of the early symptoms of dementia should be launched
- Such programs, in particular, should address the male population, and individuals who don't have any relatives affected by dementia



# Discussion

- **Limitations**

- Low response rate → respondents who participated in the present study may differ systematically from those who didn't
- Self constructed items → validity and reliability
- Implication of cultural factors
- Further studies should explore other significant factors not included in this study



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**Thank You** 😊

**End of Presentation**