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## **"Active Mind" Programme Helps Approximately 10,000 Senior Citizens Prevent Dementia**

**55% of elderly population suspected to be suffering from memory problems or dementia**

In Hong Kong, one out of 10 senior citizens aged 65 or above is suffering from dementia, compared with a figure of 25 million dementia cases worldwide. With the ageing population, the number of dementia patients in Hong Kong is expected to reach 110,000 by 2020. Due to a lack of public awareness and the absence of noticeable early symptoms, many sufferers of dementia have missed the optimum time for early intervention. There is no dementia prevention programme in Hong Kong's healthcare, especially elderly care, system, and cases has to wait for at least one year for geriatric mental health or dementia day care services.

To meet this service gap, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) and CLP Power Hong Kong Limited (CLP) launched the "Care for the Elderly 2007 – Active Mind" Programme on World Alzheimer's Day (21 September 2007) as Hong Kong's first and largest cross-sector dementia prevention programme to sponsor preliminary memory assessment and mini-mental state examinations (MMSE) as well as memory training for the needy elderly. Implemented for the second year in 2009/2010, the programme saw 87 service units taking part last year, covering 40% of Hong Kong's elderly centres.

Ms Christine FANG, Chief Executive of HKCSS, said thanks to the concerted efforts of frontline practitioners from social service sector and a team of trained volunteers over the past two years, 359 publicity events were held as of March 2010 to promote the importance of mental health to over 36,000 people, with 9,846 elderly participants examined (see Table 1 for the result). Over 80% of these participants were female. Based on a comparison of education levels with the examination scores attained, 6,976 participants were shown to be suffering from memory decline and recommended to receive early memory training. With the donations from the "Active Mind" programme, a total of 3,370 senior citizens received memory training, two sessions each week for a total of eight sessions. The training programme covered identification of dementia and memory decline, attention training and special memory training methods. Participants were also required to play brain games and complete the exercises in their Memory Training Manuals to strengthen their memory and cognitive abilities and

apply the skills acquired in their daily lives. (Refer to [Appendix 1](#) for the results achieved in the past two years)

**Table 1: Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE) Result**

MMSE scores	No. of elderly participants	%	Implications
30 (Full mark)	607	6.2%	• No follow up is required
26-29	3,853	39.1%	• With potential memory problems or even mild cognitive impairment (MCI)
20-25	3,818	38.8%	• Suspected to have some difficulties in memory or even MCI
< 20	1,568	15.9%	• Suspected case of dementia, further investigation and medical referral needed
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,846</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Dr. Jenny CHUNG, Associate Professor, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences and Director, Institute of Active Ageing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University pointed out that the result of the memory training programme was encouraging. Around 70% of the elderly participants showed improvements in cognitive functioning following the memory training programme and the effectiveness of memory training was found unaffected by old age or low education levels. Nevertheless, an alarming sign is that over 50% or 5,386 of the close to 10,000 elderly participants attained MMSE scores under 25, suggesting the possibility of memory problems or dementia (see Table 1) and indicating the popularity of early cognitive impairment and the large number of potential dementia cases.

Ms. Anita WONG, member of the Active Mind Steering Committee, said, “Since there is no specific treatment for cognitive impairment, it is important to conduct early identification and prevention.” She sees the need for more dementia prevention service and network, with MMSE and memory training provided by all elderly centres regularly in the long run to meet the challenge of an ageing society.

According to Ms Jane LAU, Director – Group Public Affairs of CLP, CLP’s partnership with HKCSS began with the launch of the “Care for the Elderly” programme in 2004. With the focus of the programme shifting from providing free influenza vaccinations to the prevention of dementia since 2007, CLP has provided marketing support for HKCSS in promoting this initiative. Through a matching donation together with the support from Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged, 2,700 memory training sessions for senior citizens have been conducted. Given its success, the programme will continue to receive support from CLP in 2010/2011. CLP has pledged to match public donations from now on until 28 February 2011 on a dollar-to-dollar basis, up to a maximum of HK\$400,000.

“As a responsible corporate citizen, CLP sets a good example for the community to follow. The ‘Active Mind’ programme has successfully established an effective cross-sector model in which the business, social service organisations, the Government and the community can work together to serve our society,” said Ms Christine FANG.

Public support to the “Active Mind” programme is welcome. Donations can be made online through the campaign site ([www.clpgroup.com/care](http://www.clpgroup.com/care)), at all 7-Eleven stores, by cheque or credit card. The fund raised will be used to provide cognitive assessment, memory training classes and community education activities for the elderly in need.

Moreover, to promote sharing in the social welfare sector of quality service programmes in dementia and facilitate an exchange of implementation experience and intelligent or innovative service ideas, HKCSS will stage a sharing event 2009/2010 regarding supportive services for old age dementia patients and their caregivers. A total of 21 programmes for dementia care will be presented.

#### **About CLP**

CLP Power Hong Kong Limited (CLP) is the largest electric utility in Hong Kong serving customers in Kowloon, the New Territories, Lantau and most of the outlying islands. Operating a vertically integrated electricity generation, transmission and distribution business, CLP provides a highly reliable and safe supply of electricity and excellent customer services to over 5.7 million people in its supply area.

Outside Hong Kong, The CLP Group also holds a diversified portfolio of power generation investments that includes gas, coal, renewable and nuclear in the Chinese Mainland, Australia, India and Southeast Asia.

#### **About Hong Kong Council of Social Service**

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) is an umbrella organisation of more than 370 Agency Members that are providing over 90 percent social welfare services. The HKCSS, together with its

Agency Members, promotes the betterment of social welfare service development in Hong Kong, facilitates cross-sectoral partnership, advocates equality, justice, social integration and a caring society.



“Active Mind” steering committee members, participating organisations and the participants heartedly promote the concept of “Early Detection and Early Intervention” on dementia at the ceremony.



(From left) Ms Christine Fang, Chief Executive, Hong Kong Council of Social Service; Ms Jane Lau, Director – Group Public Affairs, CLP Holdings Limited; Dr Jenny Chung, Associate Professor, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences and Director, Institute of Active Ageing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University; and Ms Anita Wong, “Active Mind” Steering Committee Member shared the achievements of “Active Mind” program. Until now, almost 10,000 deprived senior citizens with suspected early memory problems have received free cognitive assessments and memory trainings provided by the programme.



(From left) Family member of demented patient, participant of the “Active Mind” programme and frontline practitioner share their experiences in the forum, expecting to draw public attention to the rising trend in dementia cases.



Participants of the “Active Mind” Programme interact with the attendees by demonstrating a Qigong which they learnt through the memory training classes. By practising this aerobic exercise, both the cognitive ability and body fitness can be enhanced.

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