



**Yee Hong Centre
For Geriatric Care**

頤康中心

Understanding the Chinese
Community –
Presentation to the 2010 NICE Knowledge
Exchange

Who are the Chinese

- 4000 years of civilization
- When Abraham was called by God from Ur, a civilization has already been developed in China
- When Moses led the Israelite out of Egypt, Chinese is making silk clothing and has invented the compass
- In the time of Jesus, the Roman Empire is importing silk from China.
- In the 1st century AD, the Chinese has a good system of Chinese medicine



Who are the Chinese

- They invented the compass more than 3,000 years ago. But they only use it to investigate Fang Shui
- They invented gun powder. But they only develop it to make firework.



Chinese in GTA

	Total Population	Chinese Population	Percentage of Chinese Population	Percentage Change 2001-2006
Greater Toronto Area	5,070,000	537,000	10.60%	31%
Markham	260,000	93,000	35.50%	49%
Richmond Hill	162,000	36,000	22.30%	25%
Toronto	2,480,000	309,000	12.50%	19%
Mississauga	666,000	55,000	8.30%	54%



Historical Background of Chinese Immigration to Canada

1858 – 1947

Gold Rush in California and B.C.

17,000 workers brought in to work for the CP Rail.

Mostly laborers

Discrimination. Not allowed to bring in their families. Head Tax in 1903



Historical Background of Chinese Immigration

1947 – 1967

Chinese Immigration Act repealed in 1947

Started to bring in families

Mostly family reunion



Historical Background of Chinese Immigration

1967-1981

Students, family reunion

People looking for a better future



Historical Background of Chinese Immigration

1981 – 1997

People leaving Hong Kong because of political uncertainty. Mostly middle class people, educated, entrepreneur.

With the open policy in China, people started to leave China.



Historical Background of Chinese Immigration

1997 to present

Immigrants from Hong Kong declined quickly. Immigration from Mainland China increased. In 1999, 90% of Chinese immigration to Canada were from China.



Two different cultures

China and the West



Two World Views – Mechanical vs. Relational

- Western culture sees the world as mechanical.
- Chinese sees the world relational
- Example: See how people cross the road in western countries vs. China



- The West try to make sense of this mechanism, so they develop science and technology and try to explore the world around them
- Chinese try to build up a social system that define each other's role and responsibilities.



GUANXI

- Chinese people spent their last 3,000 years developing an intricate system of relationship.
- Guanxi means relationship



The Chinese Family

Extended Family – For Chinese, “family” means more than husband and wife and their two children.

Filial Piety – Respect and honouring our seniors is one of the central theme of Confucianism that is fundamental to Chinese Culture



The Chinese Family

Family assumes the major role of decision-maker on behalf of the patient – everyone is a part of the family and has the say:

- Family will do whatever possible to “help”
- Feeling of guilt for illness and institutionalization.
- Family could be a good asset and support in the treatment process



Chinese has a different way to express love and feelings

Chinese express love and feelings through signifying acts:

- My mother never said “I love you” to me. She cooked me good food.
- Family members bringing a lot of food to visit family members in hospital and NHs.
- Chinese fighting for the bills in restaurants.



Profile of our Target Population

A National Health Survey of Chinese
Seniors –

Health & Well-being of Chinese Seniors in
Canada, 2003



Significant findings

- The study reaffirms the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate services for Chinese seniors. 41.1% of the respondents indicated they did not understand English at all and another 35.7% stated that they had a little bit understanding of English. Also this group of Chinese seniors are very much attached to Chinese culture. 76% reported high level of Chinese culture, and those who were older (65 and above) reported a higher level of Chinese than those who were younger (under 65)



Significant findings

- In this study, language and culture have been cited as major barriers to services



Significant findings

- The finding of 36.7% of general population use personal care services as compared to 1.5% of Chinese from the same age group using this service is alarming. (page x of Executive Summary)



Significant findings

- This study confirms our observation that there is an increasing prevalence of depression and mental health problems among Chinese seniors (pages vi and vii). This unsatisfactory state of mental health may be a result of alienation as a result of inability to understand English, challenges in mobility and barriers to community support services and a lack of appropriate community support services.



Significant findings

- The Mandarin-speaking population is growing fast. More than one out of four (27.1%) came from Mainland China (2002 figure). With an average of about 30,000 immigrants from Mainland China and the end of Hong Kong immigrants, the proportion of Mandarin-speaking vs. Cantonese-speaking will be growing fast.



Significant findings

- The Chinese seniors are not well-off as some people believe. 54.4% had income of \$999 or less, with 16.4% having a personal monthly income of less than \$500. (page iii of Executive Summary)



Significant findings

- This group of seniors is not well educated. 12.7% did not receive any formal education. Majority (28.3%) reported obtaining elementary education. (page iii of Executive Summary)



Significant findings

- This group of seniors is also less physically healthy than the general senior population. On average, each individual reported a mean 3.3 illnesses, which is higher than the average 2.23 illnesses reported by the same age group in the general population, more of the Chinese respondents in this study required assistance in heavy household chores (43.5% vs. 30.5%), shopping (21% vs. 11.3%), and meal preparation (9.8% vs. 6%) (page vi) of Executive Summary)



Some Considerations

- Many clients and their caregivers are limited English speakers who face considerable challenges when trying to access medical and social services
- Many clients and caregivers express the need for culturally sensitive programs and services.
- There should be radio and newspaper advertisements in linguistically relevant ethnic press and distribution of promotional flyers at culturally relevant churches, temples, supermarkets etc.



Some Considerations

- Programs have to be culturally sensitive. E.g. Sensory stimulation – What smell do you think of when you think of Autumn? Pumpkin pie? Chinese may think of dumplings, moon cakes, snake soup etc.
- As dementia progresses, people may revert back to their first language.
- Also, as dementia progresses, people may forget how to use fork and knife. They often remember how to use chopsticks and bowl.



Aging at Home and the Chinese Family

The concept of Aging at Home fits well into
the Chinese culture.

However, taking care of seniors at home
requires more knowledge and skills that
we realize



Barriers to caregiving for Chinese Families

- Caring for seniors at home is more than knowledge. Competence and a feeling of competence is important. We need a process of empowerment.
- All the information are in English and comes from a western culture. The training has to be in a language and culture that is appropriate.
- Care for the seniors is more than physical caring. It also deals with psychological, emotional and spiritual aspects which requires cultural appropriateness



Barriers to caregiving for Chinese Families

- There are cultural aspect in caring that is unique to the Chinese culture, e.g. Chinese express love differently.



THANK YOU

