

Research Grants Council to present public lecture on dementia on December 7

The following is issued on behalf of the University Grants Committee:

The Research Grants Council (RGC) will present its third public lecture this year under the theme "Challenge of Population Ageing: Dementia" on December 7 (Saturday) at the Hong Kong Central Library.

The RGC has invited Professor of the Department of Medicine and Therapeutics of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Professor Timothy Kwok, and Associate Professor of the Department of Social Work of the Hong Kong Baptist University, Dr Young Kim-wan, to share their research findings and knowledge with the public. Details are as follows:

Time: 2.30pm to 4.30pm

Venue: Lecture Theatre, G/F, Hong Kong Central Library

Language: Cantonese

Admission is free and on a first-come, first-served basis.

Dementia is a major cause of dependency in old age. It can be delayed or prevented by physical and social activities and a healthy diet. Mind and body exercises, e.g. Tai Chi and cognitive training can improve cognitive functions in elderly people. Vitamin B12 deficiency can contribute to dementia, but its supplement in those without such deficiency does not improve cognitive functions. Folic acid supplements in combination with vitamin B12 may prevent cognitive decline, but only in those who can metabolise it, and it may interfere with the actions of aspirin. Professor Kwok will deliver a talk entitled "Prevention of dementia" to the public.

There are around 100 000 elderly people with dementia in Hong Kong, and the number is expected to escalate to 290 000 by the year 2036. Currently, pharmacological treatments for dementia have been found to have a minimal effect in arresting cognitive decline and loss of memory. On the other hand, cognitive stimulation therapy has been developed in the United Kingdom and implemented successfully across different cultures and societies, including Hong Kong. Local research evidence supports the idea that cognitive stimulation therapy is effective in improving cognitive functions of elderly people with mild to moderate dementia. In his talk entitled "The positive effects of cognitive stimulation therapy for elderly with dementia", Dr Young will introduce cognitive stimulation therapy in local practice.

The public lectures of the RGC aim at arousing public interest in local research developments. Since 2009, the RGC has invited numerous leading scholars to speak at these lectures. For enquiries, please call 2524 3987 or visit the University Grants Committee webpage

(www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/rgc/lectures/lectures.html).