



Family Communication Patterns in Hong Kong

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The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust



SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
香港大學公共衛生學院

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Part I FAMILY Project: Overview

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Introduction

- FAMILY: A Jockey Club Initiative for a Harmonious Society is a citywide project launched by **The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust** with \$250 million funding, in collaboration with **the School of Public Health of The University of Hong Kong**
- The project aims to identify the source of family problems, devise suitable preventive measures and promote family Health, Happiness and Harmony (3Hs) through a territory-wide household survey, intervention projects and public education

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Part II Study on Family Communication Patterns in Hong Kong

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Background

- At the end of 2009, a population-based survey was conducted entitled “Hong Kong Family and Health Information Trends Survey” (HK – FHInTS)
- This survey explores a wide variety of topics related to family communication patterns, family relationships, and the indices of family Health, Happiness, and Harmony (3Hs)
- This survey is the first of a series and the second survey will be conducted in November, 2010

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Objectives

- To describe communication patterns and family relationships among Hong Kong families
- To analyze the relationship between family communication methods and family Health, Happiness and Harmony (3Hs)

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Methodology

- The survey was conducted during the period of November 19 to December 23, 2009
- A random telephone survey was conducted by trained interviewers
- Upon successful contact with a target household, one qualified member of the household was selected for interview
- Respondents were Hong Kong residents aged 18 or above who speak Cantonese

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Results

- A total of 1,510 Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong residents of age 18 or above were successfully interviewed

Respondents' Characteristics		Percentages
Gender	Male	46.2
	Female	53.8
Age Group	18-24	10.6
	25-44	38.4
	45-64	35.7
	65 or above	15.3
Living areas	Hong Kong Island	18.6
	Kowloon	29.8
	New Territories	51.6
Married		61.9
Working		53.2

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Measurement for mental health, happiness, and harmony

- Sample questions on measuring mental health, happiness, and harmony:

Mental Health (higher score better health):

在過去四星期裏，有多少時間你覺得心情不好，悶悶不樂？

(1.常常如此/2.大部分時間/3.有時/4.偶爾/5.從來沒有)

Happiness (higher score more happy):

一般而言，我覺得自己:1.不是一個很快樂的人 7.是一個很快樂的人

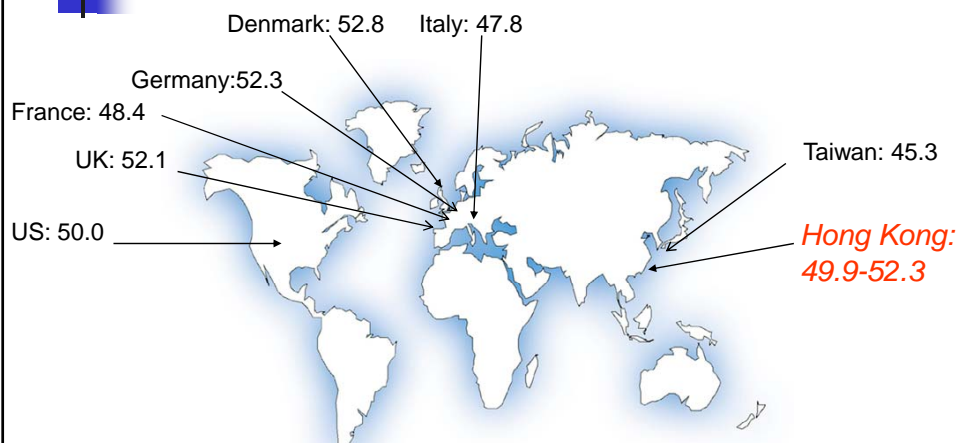
Harmony (higher score more harmony):

相比其他家庭，我家各人的關係很密切。

(1.非常不同意/2.不同意/3.中立-冇意見/4.同意/5.非常同意)

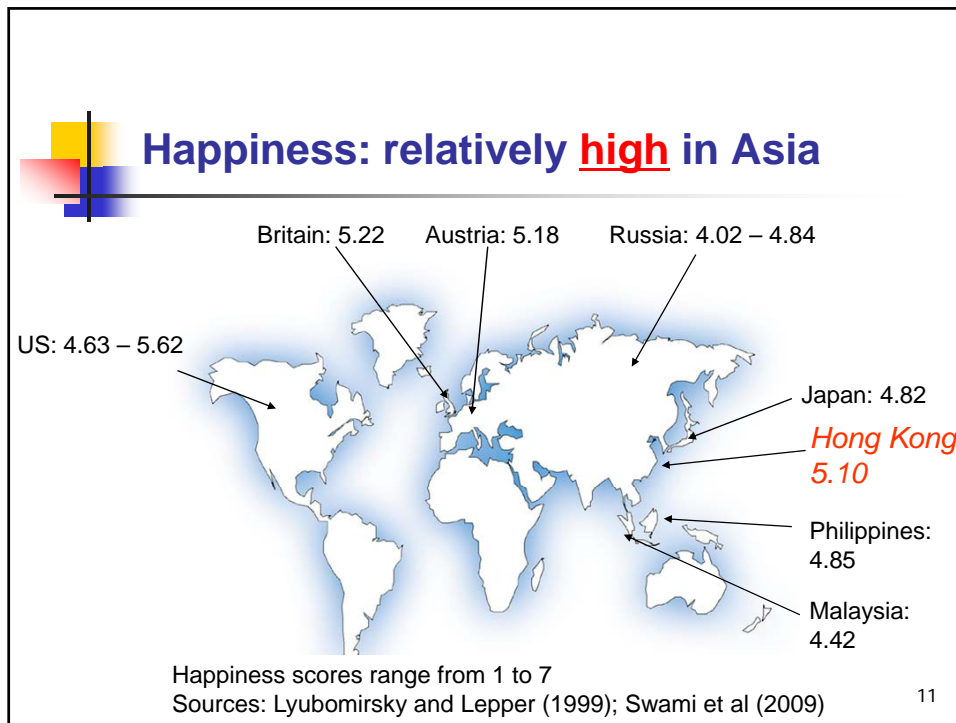
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Mental Health: high compared with some countries

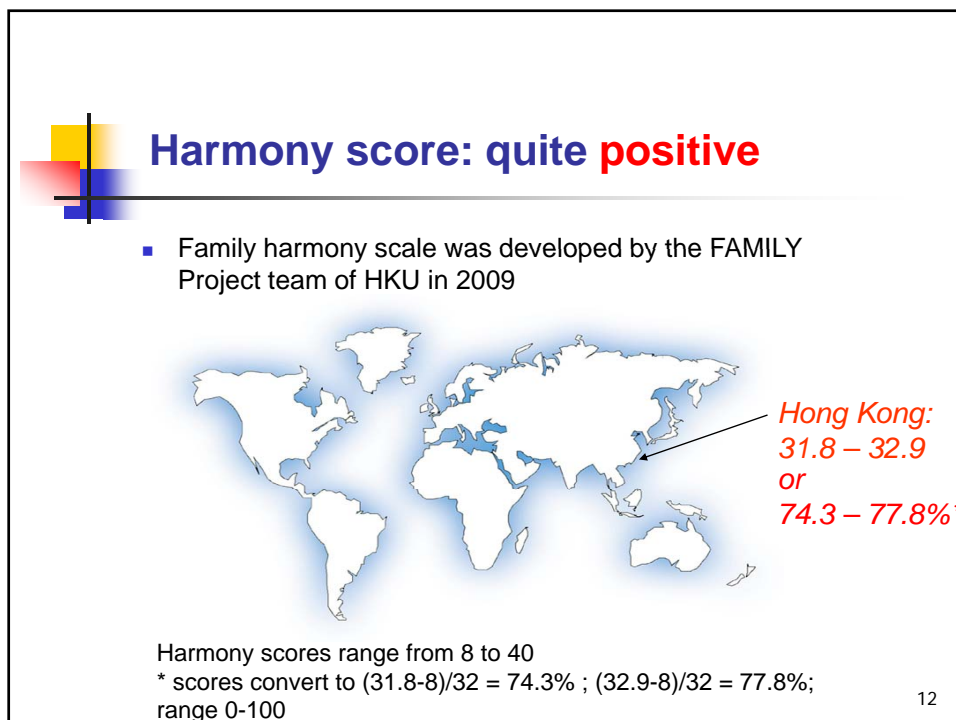


Mental health scores range from -1 to 79
Sources: Gandek et al (1998); Chang et al (2007)

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Family Communication Patterns

- Time spent with family members
- Family relationship

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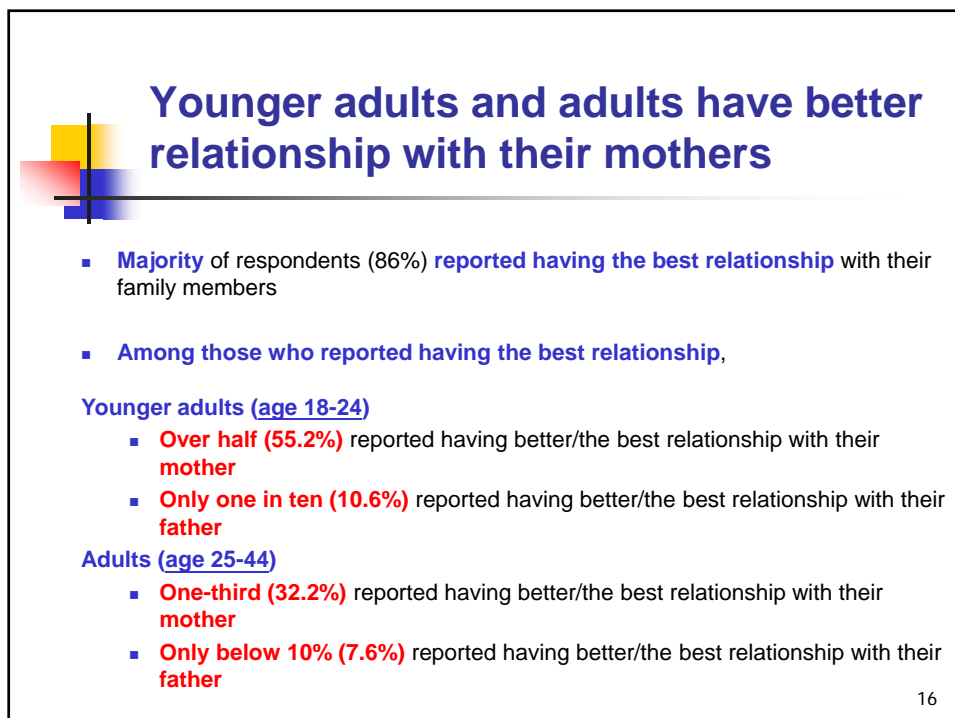
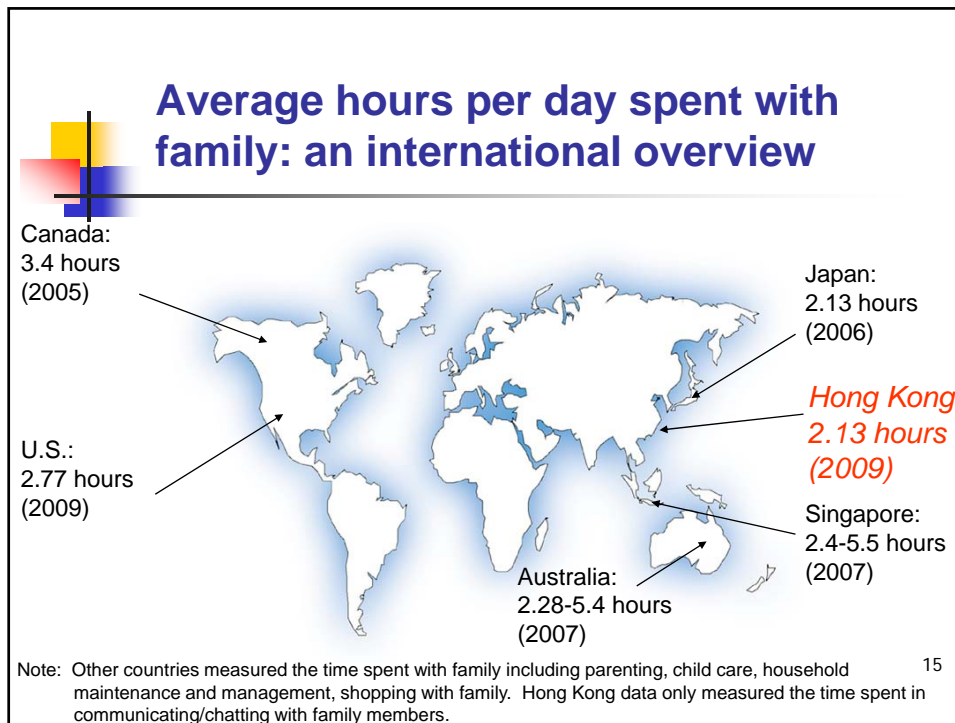


Average time spent with family

“In the past 7 days, how much time did you communicate / chat with your family members on average per day?”

Item	Mean	Median
Overall time spent	128 min. (2.13 hrs)	90 min. (1.5 hrs)

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Older adults have better relationship with their spouse

- Among those who reported having the best relationship,

Older adults (age 45-64)

- 47.8% reported having better/the best relationship with their spouse/partner
- 33.8% reported having better/the best relationship with their children

Elderly (age 65+)

- Nearly half (49.8%) reported having better/the best relationship with their spouse/partner
- 35.6% reported having better/the best relationship with their children


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The Best & the Worst relationship by age group

	Better/the Best Relationship*	Worse/the Worst Relationship**
Age 18-24	Mother (55.2%)	Father (45.4%)
Age 25-44	Mother (32.2%)	Father (24.2%)
Age 45-64	Spouse/Partner (47.8%)	Children (38.9%)
Age 65+	Spouse/Partner (49.8%)	Children (53.5%)

Note: * the percentages were calculated among those who reported having better/the best relationship with their family; ** the percentages were calculated among those who reported having worse/the worst relationship with their family


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The Best & the Worst relationship by gender		
	Better/the Best Relationship*	Worse/the Worst Relationship**
Male	Spouse/Partner (43.8%)	Parents (37.7%)
Female	Children (30.9%)	Brothers/Sisters (25.5%)

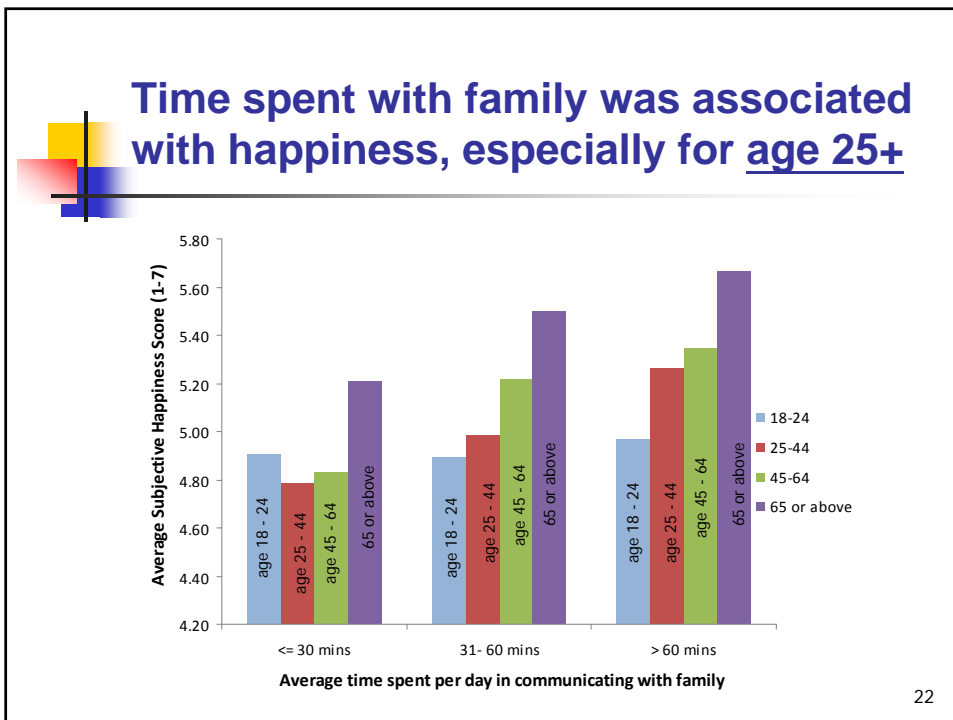
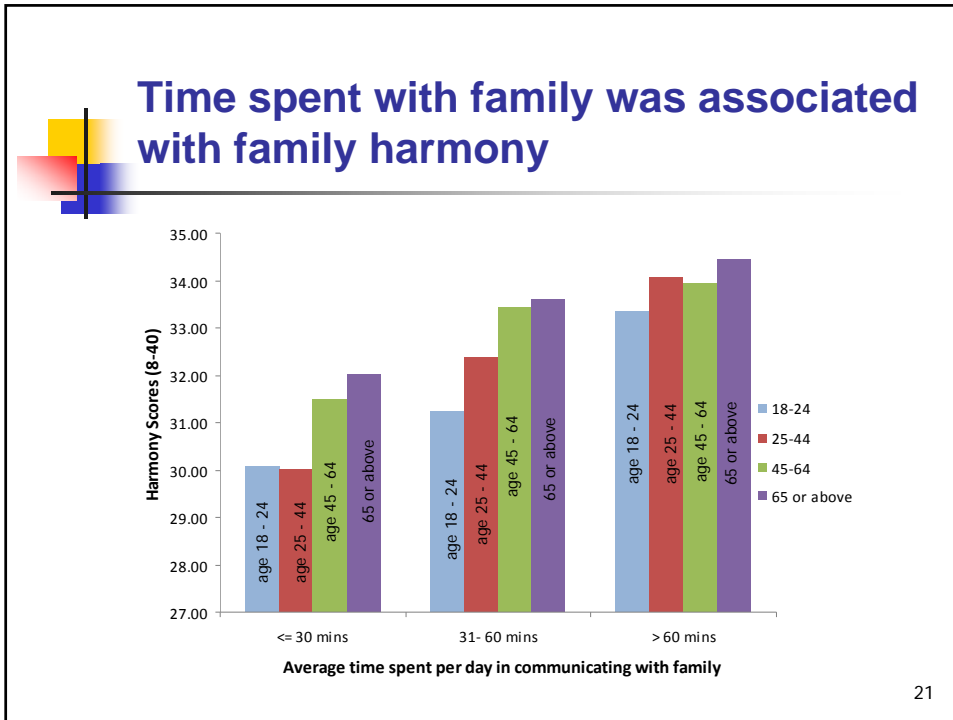
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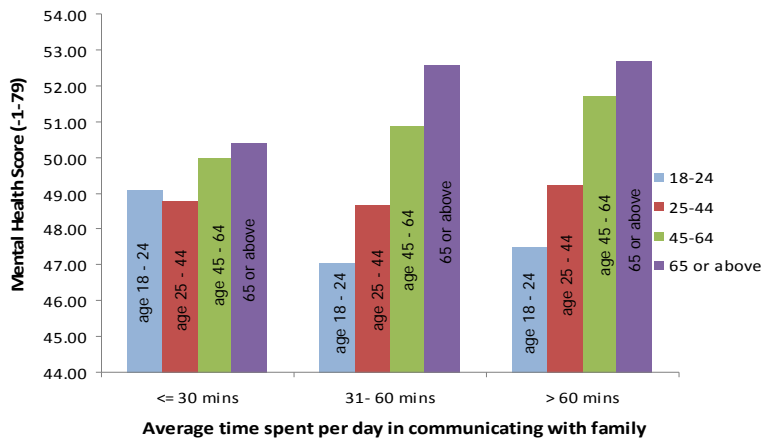


Factors associated with family health, happiness, and harmony

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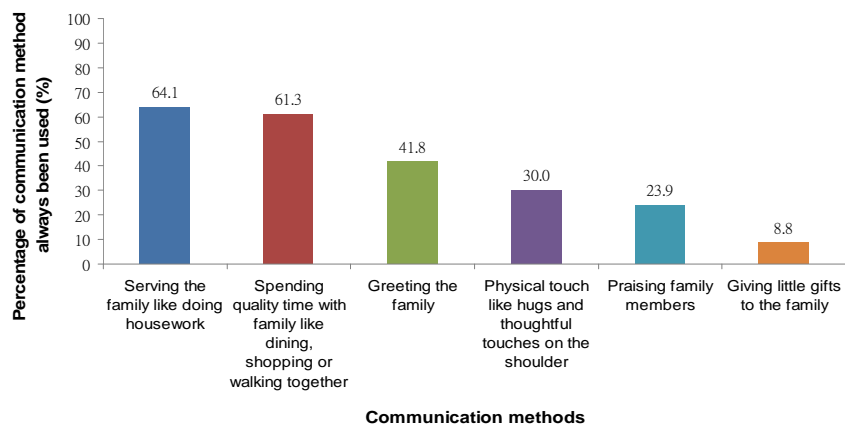


Time spent with family was associated with mental health, especially for age 25+

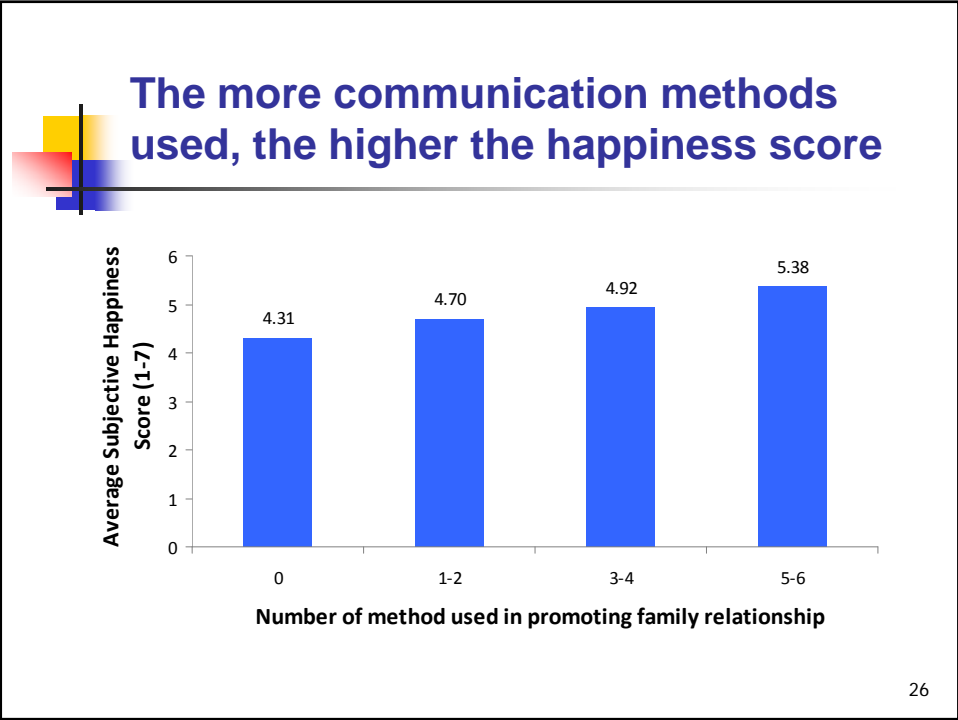
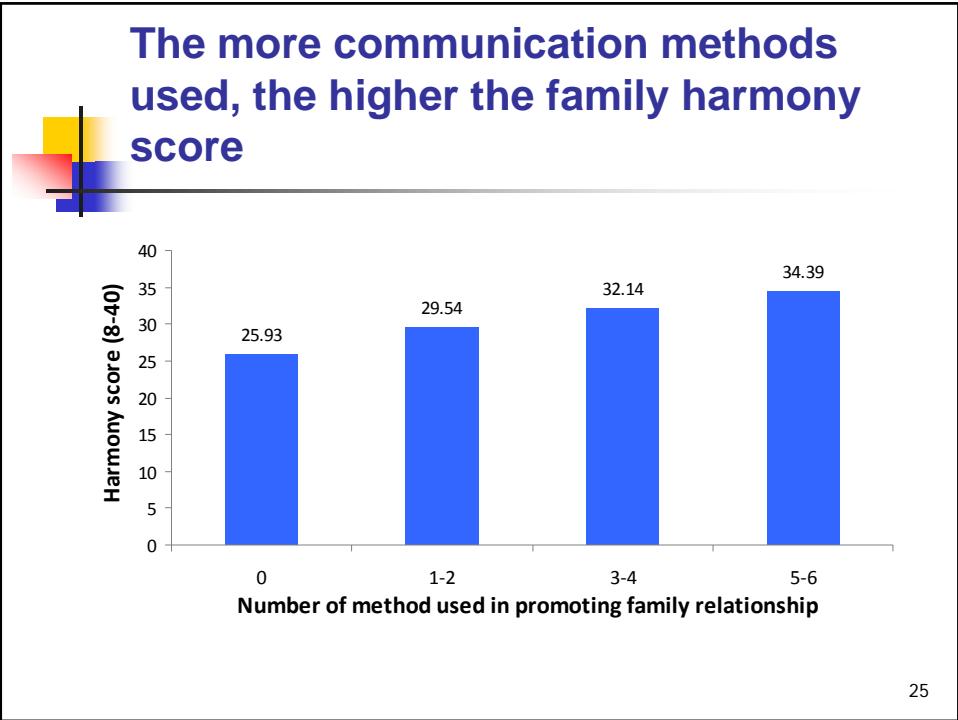


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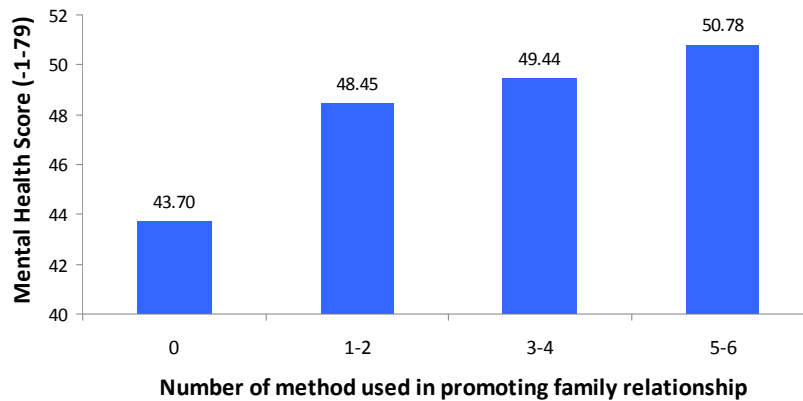
Family communication methods used to keep or promote relationship with family



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The more communication methods used, the higher the mental health score



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Family communication methods related to family 3Hs

- **Praising family members** was significantly associated with family harmony and happiness ($p < 0.001$)
- **Physical touch** (e.g. hugging, thoughtful touches on the shoulder, etc.) was significantly associated with family harmony and happiness ($p < 0.05$)
- **Spending quality time** with family like dining, shopping or walking together was significantly associated with family 3Hs ($p < 0.001$)

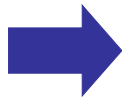
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Conclusion and implications (1)

Factors to promote 3Hs:

- Time spent with family ↑ ; 3Hs ↑
- Communication methods ↑ ; 3Hs ↑

- People tend to adopt methods like serving family to maintain / promote their family relationship, but are less likely to use methods such as praising or hugging their family members
- However, praising family members and physical touch are associated with family harmony and happiness
- Spending quality time with family like dining, shopping or walking together have a positive impact on family 3Hs



**More time spent with family, more praise and hugs;
More happiness & harmony !**

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Conclusion and implications (2)

- Other than having a good relationship with mother, we encourage younger adults (age 18-24) and adults (age 25-44) to build a positive relationship with their father as well
- We also encourage the younger and older adults (age 45+) to cultivate a positive relationship with each other



**Enhancing communication between
generations is the key to family harmony**

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Acknowledgements

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- The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust
- The Public Opinion Programme,
The University of Hong Kong (HKU POP)
- HKJC Family Project Team members
- Dr. Vish Viswanath, Harvard School of Public Health

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<p>My Supermom</p> <p>Single parent families are more prone to more challenges, care and support among family members is important in facing all the challenges. (Cantonese only)</p> 	<p>Let's Walk Together</p> <p>It is tough for a family to face drastic changes of health condition of any family member. Family cohesion helps the entire family to walk together to cope with changes. (Cantonese only)</p> 
<p>Movements of Growing Up</p> <p>Positive parenting not only nourishes positive attitudes and behaviors of children, it also strengthens family relationship through the interactive process. (Cantonese only)</p> 	<p>First Lesson for a Child</p> <p>Parents are the most influential teachers of children, so it is very important for parents to set up the right role models. (Cantonese only)</p> 

Heart Touching Episodes @ YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/familyhk3h>

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FAMILY: A Jockey Club Initiative for a Harmonious Society

Website: <http://www.family.org.hk>
Heart Touching Episodes@YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/familyhk3h>

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