



# The Well-being of Chinese older adults (with dementia) in the United Kingdom

Patrick Ho Lam Lai  
University of Michigan School of Social Work



## Location: United Kingdom

London, Birmingham, and Manchester are the three cities I visited for this research study

## Community Partners

London Chinese Community Centre, Islington Chinese Association, Chinese National Healthy Living Centre, Chinese Community Centre – Birmingham, Birmingham Chinese Society, Wai Yin Society, Chinese Health Information Centre



## Project Information

**Preparation:** literature review, research proposal, emails to community agencies, consent forms and interview questions in Simplified, and Traditional Chinese and English versions.

**Research Output:**  
1. community outreaching to 22 agencies  
2. interviewing 22 older adults (including with dementia), 1 family member and 9 community professionals

**Other Learning Experiences:**  
1. having lunch with older adults in two agencies  
2. live radio recording in Manchester  
3. making dim-sum with Chinese older adults  
4. assisting a community art project “To the moon”, such as facilitating older adults to brainstorm things related to the moon

## Factors Affecting Well-Being

In the interviews, older adults and family members mentioned that the following factors affecting their well-being: language (n=20), physical health (n=17), friends (n=15), community support (n=15), cognitive level (n=12), family (n=7), discrimination (n=3), and transportation (n=1).

## Advice

**Snowball effect:** Developing relationships with community partners is important and they may help connect to more agencies and recruit subjects.

**Seeking help:** Using different methods to seek help from community agencies is the key to conduct a global study. These methods include emails, phone-calls and walk-in.

## Skills Developed

**Community Outreach:** Building relationships with community partners is an important skill I have developed. This skill can help me seek research opportunities from different agencies.

**Qualitative Research:** Research skills are developed, including research design, qualitative data collection, data analysis, These skills are important for evaluating the programs and discovering the needs of the clients, in my social work practice in the future.

**Project Management:** Time, resources and manpower are limited in social welfare sectors. I have developed skills to manage social work project to achieve the goals on time.

## Career Connections

This global independent experience is important to develop my research interests and skills, in order to help me pursue a PhD in my future. I discovered that the well-being of Chinese older adults is one of my research interests. The findings in this research will be something I want to do follow-up research on.

## Potential Future Research Topics

1. Difference on life situation and well-being of Mandarin speakers and Cantonese speakers in the UK.
2. Is language barrier the most important factor affecting the well-being of Chinese older adults in non-Chinese society?
3. The relationship between the impacts from friends and from family members on the well-being of Chinese older adults in the UK.

## Classroom Connections

**Interpersonal Practice Skills Laboratory (SW511)** and **Interpersonal Practice with Individuals, Families, and Small Groups (SW521)** equipped me with the interpersonal skills to build relationships and conduct interviews with older adults, family members, and community professionals.

**Adulthood and Aging (SW616)** helped me understand the psychosocial development and changes of older adults. This understanding helped me design this research study on the well-being of Chinese older adults in facing their aging process.

**Basic Social Work Research (SW522)** trained me with data skills in developing this global research.

**Introduction to Community Organization, Management and Policy / Evaluation Practice (SW560)** built my skills on conducting community outreaching to recruit subjects in this research.

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Office of Global Activities, School of Social Work for financially supporting my research project.

Thank you Professor **Lydia Li** for advice on preparing and implementing this research project.