

“What is frailty?” & “Living with Dementia in Aotearoa”

Speakers: Dr Gary Cheung & Dr Adrian Martinez-Ruiz

Dear members

We have welcomed the CCiG seminar on 25th February 2020 with a big bang with close to 70 enthusiastic colleagues joining our session in-person or remotely via Zoom. **We are very grateful for the generosity of Janssen Pharmaceutical for providing us with a sumptuous dinner** . A big “thank you” to those who stayed behind to help us rearrange the tables and chairs.



We were privileged to have two presenters, Dr Gary Cheung and Dr Adrian Martinez-Ruiz who are passionate clinical researchers in the gerontology field. They have presented two very informative and exciting research studies: (i) frailty from the perspectives of Chinese clinicians and older immigrants in Auckland; and (ii) the first of its kind research in Aotearoa on multicultural dementia prevalence feasibility study.

Dr Cheung led the discussion about “What is frailty?” which helped the participants to reflect on different aspects of declination in a person from physical ability to cognition functioning. He shared the findings from 18 participants who were mainly Mandarin and Cantonese speaking and the three themes that emerged are *“ill-health, medical comorbidities”, “physical weakness, decline in physical and cognitive functioning”*

and “association with physiological and social health”. These findings are consistent with the multi-dimensional concept of frailty found in many other international researches. This study has provided face validity on how to strike a meaningful conversation regarding frailty with older Chinese New Zealanders.

The participants were awed by the method that was used for the research presented by Dr Adrian as the research team went door-to-door knocking of 1,336 households to recruit 198 Māori, Samoan, Tongan, Fijian-Indian, Indian-Indian, and Chinese participants who were above 65 years old for the feasibility study. To date, they have completed phase 2 and is working towards the goal of the prevalence study and aim to complete data collection by August this year and the writing up of the research by 2021. The study hopes to benefit the effective diagnosis of dementia among Maori, Chinese, Samoan, Tongan, Fijian-Indian and Indian-Indian.

At the end of each presentation, there were several questions and active discussion.

There was a last-minute question from a zoom participant which was not responded at the session:

“What is the best way to encourage a patient in the practice setting to come in and have an assessment done by the GP, when the patient feels threatened by it and keeps cancelling the appointment. The family, nurses and pharmacist have all noticed a real deterioration in this person’s mental state. For example, she rang and asked for her prescription seven times in a few days and seemed to have no recollection she had an appointment the week before and had already got the prescription.”

We have elicited a response from Dr Cheung to the above question and sharing it below:

“We can say to the patient that there are often reversible medical causes for memory problems and a GP assessment could identify these causes (if any) and treat them. If it is indeed dementia (ie. ‘there is no cure’), there are medication and non-pharmacological interventions that can be trialled to slow down the progression.”



[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD THE POWERPOINT FOR THE “WHAT IS FRAILITY” SESSION](#)

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE RECORDED “WHAT IS FRAILITY” SESSION](#)

Password: ccig2020!

NB: There is no powerpoint nor recording for the second presentation “Living with Dementia”

WHATS COMING UP NEXT!!

What: “Cultural complexities in capacity assessments”

Speaker: Dr Alexa Srzich **Facilitator:** Jim Xu

When: Tuesday: 21st April 2020 (6pm to 8.30pm)

Where: Conference Room, Independent Living Service, 14 Erson Avenue, Royal Oak, Auckland

Thank you again for your interest and support and we look forward to seeing you at our next meeting.

Sue Lim, QSM, on behalf of the Cross Cultural Interest Advisory Group

For more information about the advisory group, newsletters, membership application, previous topics, please go to

<https://www.ecald.com/cross-cultural-interest-group/>