



Chinese Older People's Perception of Privacy and Dignity in Residential Care Homes

Diana Lee
Chair Professor of Nursing

The Nethersole School of Nursing
Faculty of Medicine
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



Privacy and Dignity

- Respecting privacy and dignity
 - important basic principles of humanity
 - important goals of care

- Construed through socio-cultural norms and traditions
 - sensitive to socio-cultural differences



Privacy and Dignity

- Yet, limited knowledge on these concepts in a non-western cultural context
- Still less is known of how Chinese elders perceive what supports/undermines their privacy and dignity





'01.12.7



The Hong Kong Scene

- Problems of psychosocial care provision eg. insensitive and disrespectful domestic chores and daily care
- ? how Chinese elders perceive what supports/ undermines their privacy and dignity in residential care homes
 - A grounded theory study



Privacy in RCHs

Meaning of privacy in RCHs

- Not needing privacy in residential care homes

‘Privacy is about having things concealed from others. We have everything done together here.... eat, chat and sleep together.... Why do we need privacy? Its communal living here! I dare to say that there is no need for privacy here.’

(08, 1188-1207)



Privacy in RCHs

- Protecting personal and health information
- Having personal time and space to do what one wants to do:
 - keeping personal possessions, especially money
 - not being interfered with when not want to
 - not bothering others and others not bothering them



Privacy in RCHs

Respecting privacy in RCHs

- Staff not gossiping elders' information to others
- Using own efforts, e.g. creating security for one's own possession
- Using existing resources provided by the home, e.g. padlocks, lockable toilet doors



Dignity in RCHs

Meaning of dignity in RCHs

→ Being in satisfaction with relations:

- Family demonstrating acts of concerns e.g. being taken out for meals during festivals, being accompanied back from home leave by the **son**
- Being cared for by staff with sensitivity and being treated equally by all staff



Dignity in RCHs

Meaning of dignity in RCHs

→ Being in satisfaction with relations:

- Having satisfying relations with other residents
 - other elders showing concern and respect
- Having opportunities to maintain contacts with life outside of the home



Dignity in RCHs

Supporting dignity in RCHs

- Involving family in care provision
- Trusting staff who provide care with sensitivity
- Promoting resident-resident relations



Reflection

The influence of Chinese socio-cultural values:

1. Meeting collective rather than individual needs

- accepting the limitations arising from communal living

‘In this place, everyone is similar. How can one do whatever one wants?’ (18, 220-222)

- enjoying the sense of security and togetherness in communal living: RCH as a big family



Reflection

2. Importance of family involvement

3. Being satisfied with what is being offered

‘Being an elder, what other things should one request for?What else should I wish for? If they cook every of my meal, and if anything happened and they help me, then I am already very happy.’ (01, 916-933)

4. Being obedient and respect for authority



Respecting Our Elders

- Acknowledge older persons as individuals
 - each with own distinct life history
 - each making choices within socio-culturally determined norms and boundaries
- Shift from institutional focus of care to a modality that focus on older people as unique individuals: **Person-centered Care**



Acknowledgement

Competitive Earmarked Research Grant
(CUHK 4161/04H)

