

RESEARCH PROFILE

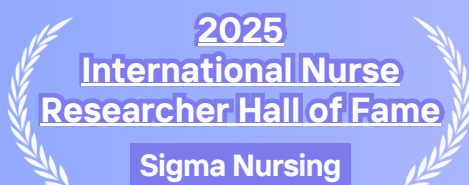
6th Edition





Prof. CHIEN Wai Tong

Director and Professor
The Nethersole School of Nursing
Faculty of Medicine
The Chinese University of Hong Kong



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In recent years, our School has reached milestone successes and set new records in prestigious international rankings and competitive research funding, reaffirming our world-class leadership and competency in nursing research and education. While we take pride in these recognitions, our true mission extends beyond accolades; we strive to translate research excellence into high-quality, tangible, and sustainable health solutions that contribute meaningfully to global health. This publication provides an insightful overview of our research achievements and ongoing efforts throughout 2024, along with some recent updates in 2025. The featured stories showcase the innovators and trailblazers among us who are transforming nursing care through strategic international, interdisciplinary collaboration. I hope these stories will inspire you as we continue to elevate our leadership and excellence, remaining at the forefront of evidence-based nursing research while expanding our reach and impact.

”

“

In 2024, our School has seen remarkable growth in both the breadth and depth of its research portfolio. This progress reinforces our global leadership and excellence in nursing, anchored not only in high-impact, evidence-based research but also in the effective delivery of holistic care. This publication reflects our steadfast commitment to innovation, discovery, and knowledge creation. It also showcases the dedication and achievements of our research teams in developing tech-driven innovations and novel interventions aimed at addressing equity challenges and bridging critical service gaps—ultimately empowering patients, caregivers, and families. Looking ahead, we are excited to explore emerging fields such as genetic and genomic nursing, provide greater support for aspiring researchers, and continue to achieve significant breakthroughs that will reshape and transform healthcare for the better in an ever-evolving global landscape.

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Prof. CHAIR Sek Ying

Vice-Director of Research / Professor
The Nethersole School of Nursing
Faculty of Medicine
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

The Nethersole School of Nursing cultivates a supportive environment conducive to innovative discoveries and cutting-edge research, generating new knowledge and quality evidence to inform best nursing practices and healthcare outcomes for a better and healthier tomorrow.



We adopt the system below to foster innovation & research excellence:





WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS BY SUBJECT — NURSING (2025)



Our School has achieved a **historic milestone** by advancing three places from the 8th to the 5th top position in the 2025 QS World Subject Rankings, marking our **first-ever entry into the GLOBAL TOP 5!**



#1 IN HONG KONG & ASIA

(2016–2025)

(2020–2025)



SCORES WELL IN QS RESEARCH INDICATORS



CITATIONS PER PAPER

#2 IN ASIA & **#4** IN THE WORLD

Remains Asia's TOP 3 in 2020–2025 & the World's TOP 10 in 2023–2025

H-INDEX CITATIONS

#4 IN ASIA

Remains Asia's TOP 5 in 2020–2025

12

WORLD'S TOP 2% SCIENTISTS SUB-FIELD: NURSING (2023)



Our School has a total of **10 current professorial staff** and 2 Emeritus Professors ranked among the **WORLD'S TOP 2% SCIENTISTS FOR 2023** by Stanford University (as announced in September 2024).

“OUR HIGHLY CITED RESEARCHERS SPECIALISED IN 8 SUBJECT AREAS OF RESEARCH

- Cardiovascular System & Hematology
- General & Internal Medicine
- Geriatrics
- Neurology & Neurosurgery
- Oncology & Carcinogenesis
- Psychiatry
- Public Health
- Toxicology



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FELLOWS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSING



As of 2025, our School has **10 current professorial staff** and 2 Emeritus Professors inducted as **Fellows of the American Academy of Nursing (FAANs)**, distinguishing themselves among the world's most accomplished leaders in advancing nursing and healthcare education, research, and practice. Remarkably, they represent more than 50% of the total number of FAANs in Hong Kong,

35

AWARDS & HONOURS (2024) INDUSTRY & RESEARCH EXCELLENCE



Last year was a highly rewarding year. Our professorial staff and postgraduate research students shone brightly on both local and international stages, earning a **total of 35 fellowships, scholarships, and awards** recognising their industry and research excellence.



NOTABLE MENTIONS (2024)

PRESTIGIOUS FELLOWSHIPS & TITLES

Prof. Helen CHAN

- ✦ 2024 **International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame**

Sigma Nursing

*Prof. Wai Tong CHIEN also received this honour in 2025.

Prof. Wai Tong CHIEN

- ✦ 2024 **Honorary Fellow**
HK Academy of Nursing & Midwifery
- ✦ 2024 **Outstanding Fellow**
CUHK Medicine

Prof. Ka Ming CHOW

- ✦ 2024 **Fellow**
American Academy of Nursing

*Prof. Ho Yu CHENG also received this honour in 2025.

MULTIPLE-AWARD-WINNING INVENTION

The **Pai.ACT™ mobile app**, co-invented by **Prof. Connie CHONG & Prof. Wai Tong CHIEN**, won four awards in 2024:

✦ **Gold Medal**

49th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva

✦ **Silver Medal**

Silicon Valley International Inventions Festival

✦ **Certificate of Merit**

HKICT Awards 2024:
Smart People Award
(Smart Empowerment)

✦ **1st Prize in Oral Presentation**

(Nursing, Allied Health)
Joint Annual Scientific Meeting
HK Paediatric Soc.
HK College of Paediatric Nursing
HK Paediatric Nurses Assoc.

OUTSTANDING PRESENTATIONS BY STUDENTS

PhD in Nursing student Ms. Myrian FAN

- ✦ **3rd Prize for Academic Oral Presentation**
(Science & Engineering)
2024 CUHK(SZ)-CUHK Joint Graduate Research Forum

Doctor of Nursing student Ms. Angel MA

- ✦ **Silver Award for Research Excellence (Poster Presentation)**
37th Annual Scientific Meeting & International Symposium on Hepatology
HK Assoc. for the Study of Liver Disease



RESEARCH FUNDING (2024)

In the capacity of principal investigator (PI) or co-investigator (Co-I)

HIGHEST TOTAL AMOUNT RECEIVED IN RECENT YEARS!



15 Internal Competitive Grants

23 External Competitive Grants / Donations
> HK\$92 million

Research Grants Council (RGC) / University Grants Committee (UGC)

- ★ Collaborative Research Fund (CRF) Young Collaborative Research Grant
- Faculty Development Scheme
- General Research Fund (GRF)
- Humanities & Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS)
- Theme-based Research Scheme

Government Departments & Agencies

- Chinese Medicine Applied Studies & Research Funding Scheme (B2), Chinese Medicine Development Fund
- Health & Medical Research Fund (HMRF), Health Bureau
- Pneumoconiosis Compensation Fund Board (PCFB)

Charitable/Individual Donations, Industry & Others

- Harmony House Limited
- Hong Kong Applied Science & Technology Research Institute
- Hong Kong Cancer Fund
- ★ The Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC) Charities Trust

... & more!

www.nur.cuhk.edu.hk/research/external-grants

Secured substantial funding & donations

✓ CRF ~ HK\$41 million for 1 project

✓ HKJC ~ HK\$40 million for 2 projects

2024 Visits of International Scholars with funding support available

★ Engagement of
experts/consultants to deliver
seminars/workshops on Research
Assessment Exercise (RAE)

★ Engagement of
experts/consultants to deliver
research seminars/workshops

★ Distinguished Visiting Professor
Scheme (DVPS)



Visited in May 2024

Prof. Mark HAYTER

Head
School of Nursing & Public Health
Manchester Metropolitan University
United Kingdom



Visited in June 2024

Prof. Sandie McCarthy

Dean (Research)
Griffith University (Health)
Australia



Visited in July 2024

Prof. Linda JOHNSTON

Professor
Lawrence Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing
University of Toronto
Canada

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS (2024)

In the capacity of first author / corresponding author / co-author



Our School has a strong track record of maintaining **high productivity and quality in research outputs**, averaging **5.5 high-quality publications** per staff member each year. Around 50% are published in journals with an impact factor (IF) above 3, while 68% are published in Web of Science (WoS) Q1 journals, which represent the top 25% in the world.

TOTAL PUBLICATIONS:

158
papers

IF
≥ 3

79

published in high impact journals

Q1

108

published in WoS Q1 Journals



WORLD-LEADING JOURNALS FEATURING OUR RESEARCH

- *Lancet Neurology*
- *Lancet Public Health*
- *Biosensors & Bioelectronics*
- *JAMA Network Open*
- *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*
- *Obesity Reviews*
- *International Journal of Nursing Studies*
- *European Psychiatry*
- *Journal of Medical Internet Research*
- *JMIR mHealth & uHealth*
- *Addiction*
- *Journal of the American Heart Association*
- *Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences & Social Sciences*
- *Nutrients*



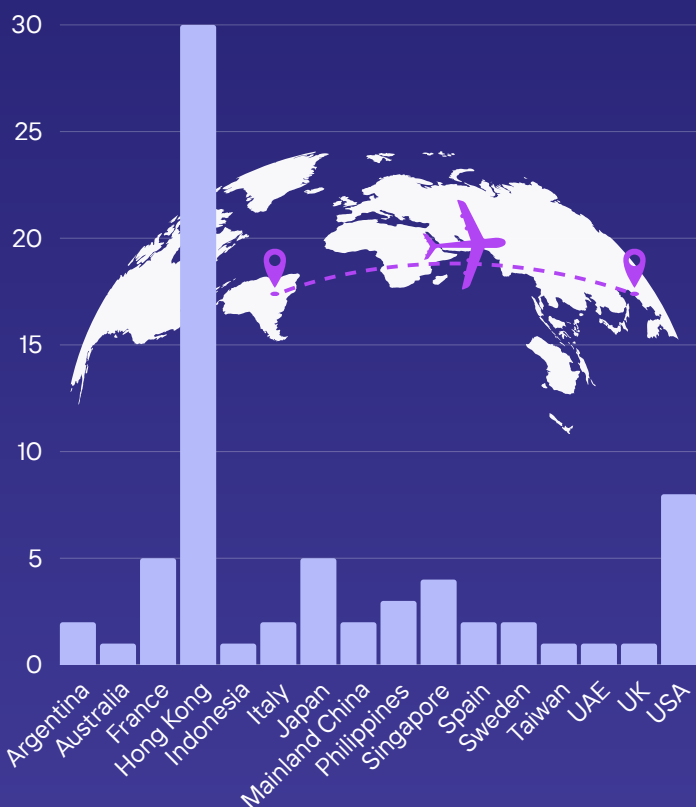
... & more!



www.nur.cuhk.edu.hk/research/publications

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (2024)

In person, virtual or pre-recorded; worldwide participation



70

oral/poster presentations delivered
in 16 different countries & cities

13

keynote presentations for local,
national & international conferences

- 2024 Peking University INR Forum
Mainland China
- 2024 International Society of Nurses in Genetics (ISONG) World Congress
USA
- Asia Eastern University of Science and Technology (AEUST) 2024 International Conference-Global Health Issues Toward the Sustainable Development of Nursing Education, Research, and Practice
Taiwan
- CU Medicine GAME-TEI Summit for Future Leaders 2024
Hong Kong

... & more!



2024 RESEARCH EVENT RECAPS

✓ ORGANISED

9th Nursing Symposium on Cancer Care cum
1st Genomic and Genetic Nursing ForumFrom traditional to digital: Transforming cancer and
genomic nursing care through collaboration and innovation

22-24.5.2024

1st
Genomic & Genetic
Nursing Forum
in HK!

~ 260 participants worldwide



21 distinguished speakers

109 oral & poster
presentationsSix of our colleagues delivered
keynote, oral & poster presentations

~250 local participants

✓ CO-ORGANISED
NICHE Research SymposiumPromoting Holistic Health:
Evidence & Impacts

2.11.2024

1st
NICHE Research
Symposium!

UPCOMING EVENT IN 2026:

8TH PAN-PACIFIC NURSING CONFERENCE CUM 2ND COCHRANE HONG KONG SYMPOSIUM

香港中文大學
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

CU Medicine
Faculty of Medicine
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Cochrane
Hong Kong

**Eighth Pan-Pacific Nursing Conference cum
Second Cochrane Hong Kong Symposium**

Hong Kong Science Park, Hong Kong SAR

**The Future of Nursing:
Innovation and Impact in Action**

Pre-conference workshops
24-25.3.2026

Conference
26-28.3.2026

Selected abstracts
will be published in the
*International Journal of
Nursing Studies*.

IF
7.1
(2024)

www 8thpanpacificconf.nur.cuhk.edu.hk

Our School is proud to host this highly anticipated nursing event celebrating **our 35th anniversary in 2026**. Building on past successes, we are committed to delivering a dynamic programme that promises a fruitful experience for all delegates. Join us and contribute to the collective effort to drive transformative and sustainable advancements in innovative, impactful research across the Pan-Pacific region!

Programme Highlights:

- **Hands-on workshops** for mastering strategies for conducting systematic reviews and meta-analyses to enhance evidence-based practice.
- **Keynote, plenary and symposium sessions by distinguished speakers** from the UK, US, Canada, China, Japan, Singapore, Korea, Israel, and our local community will cover topics and sub-themes such as AI-driven innovations, health equity, genetics and genomics, and more!
- **Scholarly showcases of delegates via oral and poster presentations**, with opportunities for awards, scholarship, and publication in the *International Journal of Nursing Studies*.

REGISTER NOW!

SUBMIT ABSTRACTS!

TUNING IN TO THE RHYTHM OF POST-CARDIAC REHABILITATION

A Cost-Effective Music-paced Physical Activity Intervention for Patients with Coronary Heart Disease



Research team

PI: Prof. Sek Ying CHAIR

Prof. Janet SIT, Prof. Ho Yu CHENG, Dr. Kai Chow CHOI and Mr. Terry WONG



Collaborator(s)

Cardiac Rehabilitation Centre of Tung Wah Eastern Hospital provided valuable support for participant recruitment and study implementation



Funding support

Health & Medical Research Fund (HMRF)

Physical activity offers significant cardiovascular benefits for patients with coronary heart disease; however, maintaining regular physical activity remains a considerable challenge for healthcare professionals. Incorporating music into physical activity routines may provide a promising solution to enhance adherence.

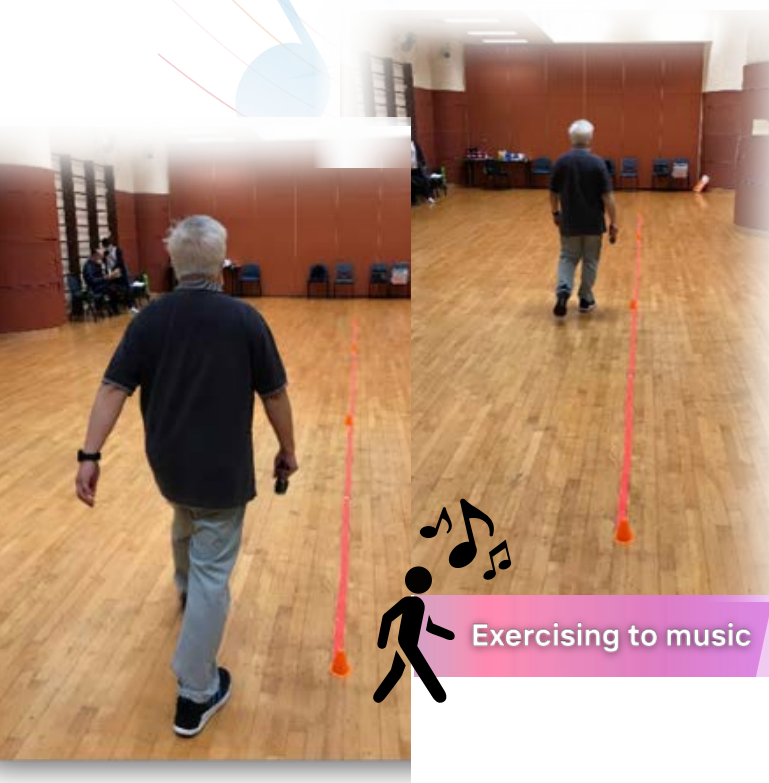
This study leverages the Information-Motivation-Strategy model by **utilising personalised, tempo-synchronised music to motivate participants to engage in moderate-intensity physical activity**. The music not only sets the pace and provides intensity cues but also helps reduce perceived discomfort and enhance motivation.

Additionally, telephone follow-ups, grounded in Self-Determination Theory, were conducted to support participants in autonomously maintaining physical activity. These calls were designed to fulfil the three basic psychological needs—autonomy, competence, and relatedness—thereby fostering sustained engagement in physical activity.

Compared to the control group, the music-paced physical activity intervention participants showed significant improvements in exercise capacity and exercise self-efficacy, with effects lasting up to 6 months. Furthermore, this intervention is considered cost-effective according to standards set by the World Health Organization.

The successful implementation of this intervention offers substantial benefits not only to patients but also to healthcare providers. This study provides preliminary findings that are valuable for health policymakers and healthcare professionals in developing economically sustainable, exercise-based cardiac rehabilitation programmes within clinical settings.

Integrating music into exercise training courses for nurses and other healthcare professionals can further enhance the quality of care provided to patients with cardiac conditions. In 2024, the findings of this study were published in the *European Society of Cardiology Journal*, a leading journal of cardiovascular nursing (DOI: [10.1093/eurjcn/zvad115](https://doi.org/10.1093/eurjcn/zvad115)). The research team was also invited to present at the Health Research Symposium 2024 organised by the Health Bureau.



Exercising to music



REHAB TO REGAIN INTIMACY AFTER CANCER

Battling Sexual Dysfunction through Individual- or Couple-based Sexual Health Interventions



Research team

PIs: Prof. Ka Ming CHOW, Prof. Carmen CHAN

Dr. Alice LEUNG, Dr. Khanh NGUYEN, Ms. Cathy TSANG and Ms. Maco MA

Collaborator(s)

- Senior Research Fellow, Griffith Health Centre, Griffith University; Clinical Nurse, The Wesley Hospital Choices Programme (Australia) — Dr. Janine PORTER-STEELE
- Dean (Research), Faculty of Health, Griffith University (Australia) — Prof. Sandie McCARTHY
- Prince of Wales Hospital (HK) — Ms. Ka Yi SIU (Obstetrics & Gynaecology)
- Queen Elizabeth Hospital (HK) — Ms. Wai Man SHUM (Obstetrics & Gynaecology)
- Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital (HK) — Ms. Woon Lai LEE (Obstetrics & Gynaecology) and Mr. Wai Man LING (Clinical Oncology)

Funding support

- General Research Fund (GRF)
- Health & Medical Research Fund (HMRF) — Research Fellowship Scheme

Disrupted sexual function is a prevalent and sustained side effect experienced by women treated for reproductive cancers and has been shown to be related to poorer marital relationships, emotional well-being and quality of life. Partners of these women also report many challenges after diagnosis and treatment. However, sexual health care for this group of women and their partners has been neglected in most countries or regions, including Hong Kong, due to cultural and clinical challenges. The ever-growing population of women treated for reproductive cancers has created a more pressing need for the development of tailored sexual health interventions.



Sexual rehabilitation for women treated for gynaecological cancer

This was a randomised controlled trial that evaluated the effects of a **sexual rehabilitation programme, SEXHAB**, in improving sexual functioning, reducing sexual distress, and enhancing marital satisfaction among women treated for gynaecological cancer. The SEXHAB comprised four individual- or couple-based sessions with three major components: information provision, cognitive-behavioural therapy and counselling using motivational interviewing skills. The partners of the participants were invited to join voluntarily.

The main findings of this study have been published in *Psycho-Oncology* (DOI: [10.1002/pon.70004](https://doi.org/10.1002/pon.70004)), with an intervention completion rate of 84.6%. The findings suggest potential benefits of the SEXHAB for women resuming sexual activities after treatment for gynaecological cancer. Further studies with a longer intervention period and follow-ups are needed to confirm its sustained effectiveness.



Couple-coping intervention for women treated for breast cancer

This is an ongoing randomised controlled trial evaluating the effects of a **multimodal couple-based sexual health intervention (MCI)** on sexual adjustment among premenopausal women treated for breast cancer, and relationship quality and quality of life among the women and their partners. This intervention comprises five face-to-face or virtual individual couple counselling sessions combined with online reading, a chat-based discussion forum, and telephone calls.

The protocol of this study has been published in *PLOS ONE* (DOI: [10.1371/journal.pone.0309218](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0309218)). In addition, the feasibility findings have been disseminated at the MASCC/AFSOS/ISOO Annual Meeting 2024 (DOI: [10.1007/s00520-024-08541-z](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00520-024-08541-z)). The qualitative findings supported its feasibility and acceptability.



MCI Session 1:
In-person dyad counselling

MCI Session 2:
Virtual dyad counselling

MCI Session 3: Online reading materials & chat-based discussion

MCI Session 4:
Reminder telephone calls

IMMERSIVE DISTRACTION: THE POWER OF VR IN PAEDIATRIC CANCER TREATMENT



Alleviating Symptom Burden among Children Receiving Their First Chemotherapy



PI: Prof. Jojo WONG

Prof. Carmen CHAN and Dr. Kai Chow CHOI



Experts from other units of the Faculty of Medicine, CUHK:

- Research Professor, Department of Paediatrics — Prof. Chi Kong LI
- Associate Director (Research) & Associate Professor, School of Pharmacy — Prof. Yin Ting CHEUNG



Health & Medical Research Fund (HMRF)

Paediatric cancer patients often experience high levels of anxiety, particularly before and during their initial chemotherapy sessions. This anxiety can heighten the risk of chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting (CINV), which can adversely affect their overall well-being and treatment outcomes. Recent technological advancements have introduced virtual reality (VR) as a promising tool in healthcare, offering immersive experiences that help distract children during medical procedures.

Drawing on the principles of Pavlovian Classical Conditioning Theory, this trial **utilises VR as a means of counter-conditioning, offering a relaxing and playful environment before chemotherapy commences.** By delivering multisensory input, the VR aims to divert patients' attention away from anxiety and focus on a pleasant virtual environment, thereby preventing them from consciously paying attention to conditioned and unconditioned stimuli during chemotherapy.

This randomised controlled trial seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of VR as a distraction and relaxation intervention for reducing anxiety, CINV, and anticipatory nausea and vomiting among paediatric cancer patients undergoing their first chemotherapy.

A total of 120 chemotherapy-naïve paediatric cancer patients, scheduled to receive their first chemotherapy regimen, were recruited from a public hospital.

After participating in three VR sessions, patients in the intervention group demonstrated significantly lower levels of anxiety and nausea compared to the control group, which received standard care.

The findings suggest that VR can serve as a convenient, attractive and easily implemented intervention to distract paediatric patients undergoing chemotherapy virtually at any time and place. This offers valuable insights for future research and the practical application of VR in clinical environments to enhance paediatric patient care.

The protocols of both pilot and main trials, along with preliminary findings, have been published in a total of three peer-reviewed journals: *PLOS ONE* (DOI: [10.1371/journal.pone.0258514](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0258514)), *European Journal of Oncology Nursing* (DOI: [10.1016/j.ejon.2022.102233](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejon.2022.102233)) and *BMJ Open* (DOI: [10.1136/bmjopen-2023-079837](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2023-079837)). In addition, the team has been invited to present at two international conferences and contribute to two newspaper columns.





Pioneering Work

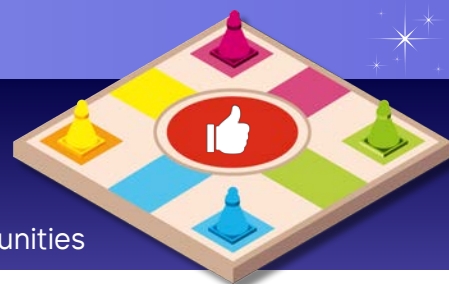
- ✦ Developed "**Let Me Talk**" (「吾」可預計) — the 1st advance care planning (ACP) programme tailored for Chinese communities
- ✦ Co-designed "**The Five Tastes Found in a Grocery Store**" (五味雜貨店) — the 1st ACP board game incorporating Chinese cultural elements

Major Honours & Recognitions (2024)

- ✦ Inducted into **International Nurse Researcher Hall of Fame 2024** by Sigma Nursing
- ✦ Ranked among the **World's Top 2% Scientists for 2023** by Stanford University

MASTERING THE END GAME WITH ADVANCE CARE PLANNING

Breaking Socio-Cultural Barriers for Better End-of-Life Care in Chinese Communities



Research team

PI: Prof. Helen CHAN

10+ professorial and research staff, along with nursing and gerontology graduates of CUHK Nursing



Collaborator(s)

Local stakeholders across healthcare, social welfare and education sectors:

- Hospitals, residential homes and community care settings
Jockey Club Centre for Positive Ageing, Haven of Hope Hospital, Prince of Wales Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital, etc.
- Charities and NGOs
HK Association of Gerontology, HK Society of Rehabilitation, Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Endless Care Services, HK Family Welfare Society, etc.
- Other units within CUHK
Jockey Club School of Public Health & Primary Care, CUHK Centre for Bioethics, School of Life Sciences; Department of Social Work, etc.



Funding support

Funding received in the capacity of PI or Co-I in recent years:

- RGC/UGC
- General Research Fund (GRF)
- Humanities & Social Sciences Prestigious Fellowship Scheme (HSSPFS)
- Government departments/agencies
- Health & Medical Research Fund (HMRF)
- Public Policy Research Funding Scheme (PPRFS)
- Donations
- The HK Jockey Club Charities Trust
- CUHK
- Knowledge Transfer Project Fund (KPF)

Advance care planning (ACP) is a concept that many of us in Chinese communities have likely heard of, but hesitate to explore until it's very late. Due to a culturally rooted preference for longevity, people often opt for life-sustaining treatments they may not fully understand or want. While these treatments may prolong life, they can also cause discomfort and distress, affecting quality of life. Despite the socio-cultural, ethical and legal complexities associated with implementing ACP in Chinese communities, it is crucial to foster readiness for conversations and participation in ACP among patients, their families and healthcare providers. By openly communicating their values and preferences for future care, individuals can take control of shaping their end-of-life care to be both holistic and high-quality, making their final moments more dignified and peaceful.

Prof. Helen CHAN and her team have been dedicated to **promoting the acceptance and effects of ACP in Chinese communities** since the 2000s. Supported by various competitive research grants and philanthropic foundations, the team has been making steady progress in **localising ACP communication styles and developing novel intervention strategies tailored to Chinese socio-cultural contexts**. Their research encompasses the conduction of qualitative policy studies on examining the implementation of Advance Medical Directives (AMDs) in Hong Kong, alongside trials of service delivery models across a variety of hospital, community and home care settings to improve care for older adults and their families facing different chronic conditions, such as frailty, dementia and intellectual disabilities.



Prof. CHAN and her team have a strong track record of leading ACP trials that resulted in favourable outcomes in facilitating decision-making and communication of end-of-life care preferences with family members, enabling better symptom management, reduced hospital readmissions and higher AMD completion rates.

The team's pioneering **"Let Me Talk" (「吾」可預計)** project, launched in 2006, was the first ACP programme tailored for Chinese communities. Continuously refined and still in use today, it has since inspired broader regional adoption across Asia.

They actively collaborate with stakeholders from healthcare, social welfare and education sectors to provide on-the-job training to build ACP capacity among professionals. They also engage in public education initiatives to raise awareness on ACP through delivering community talks and developing freely accessible learning resources such as a website, a board game, micro-movies and decision aids.



ACP capacity building workshops & booklets

More recently, the team's strong advocacy and research insights contributed to the legislative process for *The Advance Decision on Life-sustaining Treatment Bill* in Hong Kong in early 2024. In addition, the preliminary findings of **"The Five Tastes Found in a Grocery Store" (五味雜貨店)**, co-created with Tung Wah Group of Hospitals and various community partners, were published in *Palliative Medicine* in 2024 (DOI: [10.1177/02692163231222776](https://doi.org/10.1177/02692163231222776)). This gamification approach, which integrates Chinese cultural elements for end-of-life care education, proved to be an effective icebreaker for increasing immediate self-efficacy and readiness for ACP engagement among older adults in Chinese communities.



Award-winning ACP board game

- 🏆 **Excellence in Social Impact Innovation Award, HKMA/HKT Global Innovation Award Presentation Ceremony cum Innovation Summit (2023)**
- 🏆 **Finalist of 12th Asia Pacific Eldercare Innovation Awards: Innovation of the Year – Active Ageing Empowerment Programme (2024)**

WHAT'S NEXT

Enhancement of Stakeholder Engagement and Cross-sectoral Collaboration

Involve more stakeholders from the business, legal, and media sectors, alongside healthcare and social work collaborations, to foster a conducive environment for ACP promotion and AMD completion.

Expansion of Reach and Impact

Broaden the development and dissemination of culturally sensitive multimedia ACP content and other innovative strategies to effectively engage diverse Chinese communities, normalising ACP conversations within Chinese communities across Asia and beyond.

Pioneering Work

- Lead Inventor of **Pai.ACT™** — the 1st patented AI-driven Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT) mobile application tailored for parents of SEN children in HK
- Founder & CEO of **ACTuWISE Limited** — the 1st nurse-led tech & social enterprise in HK for advancing AI x ACT mental health innovations

Major Awards & Recognitions (2024)

- Gold Medal, 49th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva
- Silver Medal, Silicon Valley International Invention Festival 2024
- Certificate of Merit, HKICT Awards 2024: Smart People Award (Smart Empowerment)
- 1st Prize, Oral Presentation (Nursing, Allied Health), Joint Annual Scientific Meeting 2023/24 of HK Paediatric Bodies



PAI.ACT™: A GAME-CHANGING AI x ACT INNOVATION

Maximising the Resilience of Parents of SEN Children via Tailored Mental Health Support



Research team

Lead Inventor:
Prof. Connie CHONG
Co-Inventor:
Prof. Wai Tong CHIEN
Mr. Pui Tik YAU
Miss Hiu Ki LAW
Mr. Kin Fung CHAN
Miss Rainbow TANG
Mr. Edmund CHAN
Ms. Sophina CHAN

Collaborator(s)

- Professor & Director of Global Mental Health, Department of Psychiatry, University of Toronto — Prof. Kenneth FUNG
- Professor of Clinical Psychology, Faculty of Behavioural Sciences & Psychology, University of Lucerne — Prof. Andrew GLOSTER
- Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, CUHK — Prof. Man-ho LI
- Sha Tin District Social Welfare Office, Social Welfare Department
- Child Rehabilitation Service, HK Christian Service
- HK Federation of Youth Groups
- Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service
- HK Young Women's Christian Association
- ACTuWISE Limited

Funding support

- RGC/UGC
- General Research Fund (GRF)
- Government departments/agencies
- Innovation and Technology Fund for Better Living (FBL)
- HKSTP Incubation Programme
- CUHK
- Sustainable Knowledge Transfer Project Fund (S-KPF)
- Strategic Seed Funding for Collaborative Research Scheme (SSFCRS)

Over one-third of parents caring for children with special educational needs (SEN) experience clinically significant anxiety or depression, which exacerbates their children's behavioural and emotional difficulties. Systemic gaps in Hong Kong's healthcare and rehabilitation services compound this issue: rehabilitation programmes primarily target child outcomes, neglecting parental distress; mental health support prioritises caregivers of the elderly, marginalising these parents; and family and child rehabilitation services suffer from workforce shortages and limited access to scalable, evidence-based interventions like Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).



The research led by Prof. Connie CHONG and her team encompasses several key components aimed at building an AI-powered ACT ecosystem. Central to this is the enhancement of the **Pai.ACT™ mobile app**, which leverages their patented ACT-specific large language model to deliver personalised ACT interventions to parents of children with special needs. The **startup company ACTuWISE** was established in May 2024 to further the **development of innovative mental health solutions grounded with ACT principles**.



Pai.ACT™ features AI-driven assessments using Cantonese voice-to-text dialogues to identify psychological inflexibility, tailored ACT modules such as mindfulness and cognitive defusion exercises, automated triage for parents exhibiting moderate anxiety or depression, and backend AI algorithms that provide decision-support to counsellors by prioritising therapeutic targets. This app has secured patents with the US Patent and Trademark Office and the China National Intellectual Property Administration, with two patent applications published. Rigorous evaluations through pilot studies and randomised controlled trials have been conducted to assess the feasibility, acceptability, and efficacy of the ecosystem compared to traditional interventions. Recruitment strategies involve collaborations with local NGOs and the Social Welfare Department to engage both parents and practitioners, ensuring broad accessibility and impact.

Since its launch in 2023, Pai.ACT™ has engaged over 1,200 users and collaborated with more than 10 NGOs and governmental stakeholders, achieving a 30% reduction in mental health symptoms at 6-month follow-up. In addition, with a total of five local and international awards now under their belt, the team has firmly established their leadership in ACT innovation.

Recent findings related to the long-term efficacy of ACT for parents of children with asthma comorbid with ADHD have been published in *JAMA Pediatrics* (DOI: [10.1001/jamapediatrics.2025.1313](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2025.1313))—a top-ranked journal in Pediatrics—providing strong evidence regarding the efficacy of ACT in improving the mental health of parents and the healthcare service use of children at a 12-month follow-up.



Sharing by HKICT Award Winners
@ SocTech Symposium (2024)



Hosted the 1st ACT Forum
in HK (2025)

WHAT'S NEXT

AI-Driven Practitioner Training

- Introduction of an **AI x ACT training simulator**, utilising ACT-LLM for interactive, simulation-based learning to foster scalable skill development among practitioners.
- Seamless integration of the simulator with the Pai.ACT™ app to facilitate referrals for videoconferencing-based ACT sessions, ensuring continuity of care.

Business and Market Expansion

- Pursuit of **B2B partnerships** to license ACT-LLM for corporate wellness programmes and clinician training in organisational contexts.
- Expansion into the **Greater Bay Area (GBA)** with a localised Mandarin version, addressing cultural and linguistic needs to enhance adoption.

Strategic Goals

- Establish a cohesive and scalable ACT ecosystem that advances mental health interventions and practitioner proficiency.
- Position the project as a leader in AI-driven behavioural health solutions globally.



ACTuWISE commenced at
Innoport@Shanghai (2025)



ACTuWISE — one of the Top 10 winners of
HKTDC Start-up Express (2025)



Pioneering Work

- ✦ Founder of **Hayley Hand Care Company Limited** — the 1st social enterprise in Hong Kong providing long-term post-stroke hand care and self-management support services for individuals with hand spasticity

Recent Award (Early 2025)

- ✦ Co-creator of Merit Prize-winning video of **CUHK Centre for Bioethics 10th Anniversary Celebration · Art Competition** — "Respect and Understanding Inclusion for People with Stroke"

FROM SPASTICITY TO SELF-EFFICACY

Empowering Stroke Survivors to Take Control of Hand Recovery



Research team

PI: Prof. Suzanne LO



Collaborator(s)

Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres



Funding support

Sustainable Knowledge Transfer Project Fund (S-KPF), CUHK

Spasticity is a prevalent condition affecting over 65% of stroke survivors alone. It refers to an abnormal increase in muscle tone or muscle stiffness. As spasticity leads to difficulty in free hand movement due to involuntary muscle contractions, and pain in finger and wrist joints, people with spasticity often face difficulties in maintaining hand hygiene due to their limited mobility. People who struggle to manage this integral part of their self-hygiene may find themselves lacking confidence and hesitant to join their usual social activities.

With the support of CUHK's S-KPF, Prof. Suzanne LO founded **Hayley Hand Care** in May 2024, a pioneering social enterprise in Hong Kong dedicated to providing **personalised hand care and self-management support services for individuals experiencing upper-limb spasticity after stroke**. The company's trademark particulars were published in the *Hong Kong Intellectual Property Journal* in January 2025.



hayleyhandcare.com

also on:



The Office of Research & Knowledge Transfer Services (ORKTS), CUHK



[中大可持續知識轉移項目基金] 喜令護手有限公司 - 為中國人士提供個人化護手服務

Feature video with ORKTS

Hayley Hand Care offers a unique blend of professional nursing care, attention to aesthetics and comfort, and guidance for improving self-care. Service components include basic hand hygiene, nail cleaning and polishing, massage and spa, and educational support on performing self-adapted care. Beyond enhancing post-stroke hand mobility, emotional relief and self-efficacy, Prof. LO and her team also focus on building community capacity to support stroke survivors, promoting their employability, productivity, and social inclusion. A distinctive feature of the company's services is its collaboration with the Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres to **recruit and train golden-aged women to assist in service delivery, supported by registered nurses**. This service model not only empowers women through meaningful employment opportunities but also fosters vibrant community engagement among peers who share similar experiences as stroke survivors.



Training workshops



As of June 2025, three batches of training have been completed, with a total of 13 golden-aged women trained and became Hayley's employees. Preliminary data indicate that exercise duration was acceptable, and survivors experienced good muscle relaxation, increased confidence in hand functions, and heightened awareness of self-practice. As of July 2025, they have served over 22 people with stroke and received positive feedback.

風中愛護
Caring Hand Spa



Massage & acupressure



Rehabilitation exercises



@ Health Research Symposium 2024

In addition to providing personalised hand care services through Hayley Hand Care, Prof. LO and her team actively collaborate with various community partners and stakeholders to deliver outreach and knowledge transfer activities as part of the **COMBO-KEY (Coaching Ongoing Momentum Building On stroke rEcovery journey) programme**.

Highlights from 2024

- Presented the progress and impact of the COMBO project at the Health Research Symposium 2024, organised by the Health Bureau.
- Collaborated with working-age stroke survivors to create eco-friendly Christmas decorations from repurposed materials for an exhibit at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC), showcasing post-stroke entrepreneurship and self-employment.

As of June 2025, the COMBO team has delivered a total of 6 health talks this year, reaching over 150 participants to share essential knowledge and practical skills for stroke prevention and recovery.



Christmas Exhibition @ HKCEC



combogreenangels.com

also on:

WHAT'S NEXT

Expansion of Hand Care Services and Community Capacity Building

- Hayley Hand Care will continue to train more golden-aged women, promoting its services at different conferences and exhibitions, and collaborating with different organisations in offering services.
- Meanwhile, the COMBO project will strengthen strategic partnerships and conduct volunteer training workshops to facilitate initiatives like home-based self-management support, health talks and online concerts, promoting inclusion for people affected by stroke.



PROMOTION OF COCHRANE EVIDENCE & EVIDENCE-BASED HEALTH CARE 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

www.hongkong.cochrane.org

Meeting with various Cochrane centres and affiliates worldwide to discuss collaborative strategies and share updates aimed at enhancing evidence-based healthcare on a global scale

Virtual

Prague

Organised the 3rd Executive Committee meeting of Cochrane China Network
Apr

Attended the meeting of Cochrane Geographic Groups Directors at the Global Evidence Summit
Sep

Showcasing our leadership and impactful work in advancing evidence-based healthcare on various platforms

VIEW ARTICLE

Spotlight article featured on Cochrane.org
Jul

Presented at the ADVANCED Symposium EBM Workshop STAR Hong Kong Forum
Nov

Encouraging the dissemination and translation of Cochrane evidence into both Simplified and Traditional Chinese to expand its reach and impact among the Chinese audience

New weekly feature "Cochrane Press Release" launched on china.cochrane.org
Sep

New Cochrane Review published, with abstract & plain language summary available in Chinese
Oct

Co-organised the 4th Competition for Cochrane Evidence Translation & Dissemination
Aug-Nov



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COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



Findings presented at

PolyU's 1st RISA Symposium on Brain Ageing, Imaging & Stimulation

MRI-based on brain age estimation with convolutional neural networks (CNNs)

Oral Presentation by Dr. Manson FONG

Co-PI from The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)



Serving as a collaborator on a project funded by

CRF 2023/24 Young Collaborative Research Grant, RGC

Uncovering the Whole Spectrum of Genetic Variations Underlying Schizophrenia and its Prognosis: A Whole-genome Sequencing (WGS) Study and Prediction Modeling with Machine Learning Approaches

CUHK/HKU collaborative study led by Prof. Hon Cheong SO

Project Coordinator & Associate Professor from School of Biomedical Sciences, CUHK



Findings presented at

35th World Congress Collegium Internationale Neuro-Psychopharmacologicum

An Exploratory Analysis of Depression Comorbidity and Sleep Disturbance in China Kadoorie Biobank

Poster Presentation by Dr. Cynthia SIU

Collaborator from COS & Associates, Ltd.


Abstract published in the **International Journal of Neuropsychopharmacology**.

DOI: [10.1093/ijnp/pyae059.575](https://doi.org/10.1093/ijnp/pyae059.575)

Findings published in **RSC Pharmaceuticals**

The Etiology, Pathogenesis, Treatment, and Development of Transdermal Drug Delivery Systems for Rheumatoid Arthritis

DOI: [10.1039/D4PM00085D](https://doi.org/10.1039/D4PM00085D)

Findings published in **Biosensors and Bioelectronics: X**

A Cell Targeting and Sorting Approach Based on the Magnetophoretic Capturing for Early Prognostics of Metastatic Cervical Cancer Cells

DOI: [10.1016/j.biosx.2024.100516](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biosx.2024.100516)

Findings published in **Genes**

Structural Variations Identified in Patients with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the Chinese Population: A Systematic Review of Case-Control Studies

DOI: [10.3390/genes15081082](https://doi.org/10.3390/genes15081082)



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH NETWORK



Our School fosters a vibrant global research ecosystem to build capacity across diverse fields through international collaborations that expand both reach and impact. By **actively engaging with renowned national and overseas academic institutes** and **recruiting high-caliber research staff and PhD students** globally, we aim to maintain a high level of overall research performance and ensure consistent growth in research funding and donations.



EXTENSIVE GLOBAL REACH

In 2024, we collaborated with **scholars from over 70 countries and cities** in co-authoring high-quality research publications.

NORTH AMERICA

- Canada
- United States

EUROPE

- Albania
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Ireland
- Italy
- Malta
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- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom

EUROASIA

- Russia
- Turkey

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA

- Algeria
- Bahrain
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Iran
- Iraq
- Israel
- Jordan
- Kenya
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Libya
- Malawi
- Nigeria
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- Palestine
- Rwanda
- Saudi Arabia
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- ★ United Arab Emirates
- Zimbabwe

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- Mexico
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ASIA-PACIFIC

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- Mainland China
- India
- Indonesia
- Japan
- ★ Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Macao
- Malaysia
- Nepal
- New Zealand
- Pakistan
- Philippines
- Singapore
- South Korea
- Sri Lanka
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Vietnam



NEW MOUs signed in 2024

Our 1st partners in Central Asia

- **West Kazakhstan Marat Ospanov State Medical University**
- **Karaganda Medical University**



NEW MOU signed in 2024

Our 1st partner in the Middle East
The University of Sharjah



BE PART OF OUR RESEARCH NETWORK!



Guided by our motto and mission, we are committed to staying at the forefront of cutting-edge nursing research, pursuing excellence and meaningful impact. We strive to translate evidence-based research into tangible benefits and drive innovation on a global scale. We sincerely invite like-minded institutions worldwide to explore partnership and collaboration opportunities with us!

OUR MOTTO

“
To serve the community
with compassion
”

OUR MISSION

The School excels in education and research to prepare and nurture caring, competent and professional nursing leaders, and to promote the highest standards of nursing and health care practices.

OUR RESEARCH THEME GROUPS

Join us in exploring strategic research areas that transform scientific discoveries into innovations in nursing and healthcare — advancing patient care, driving knowledge transfer, and benefiting society.

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Behavioural &
Mental Wellness**

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