

## **Chui's Student Excellence Scheme: Ho Wing Hing Talent Fund Learning Report**

### **North America Primary Care Research Group Annual Meeting 2019**

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The North America Primary Care Research Group (NAPCRG) Annual Meeting took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> of November, 2019. NAPCRG is world's largest organization and research in family medicine, primary care and related fields”, and is the global leader in developing practice-based research networks of regional and national scopes in primary care research.

The NAPCRG's Annual Conference is consistently cited as the largest primary care research meeting internationally. This year, the Annual Conference was attended by more than 1,100 researchers, clinicians, patients, and other stakeholder members from around the world, with more than 800 research sessions to learn more about primary care related fields, including epidemiology, behaviour sciences and health services research.

Given that the development of primary care and family medicine is relatively advanced in Western countries than in HK, this conference was indeed a valued opportunity for us as future medical practitioners to interact with world-renowned experts in the field of primary care. Furthermore, the chance of presenting at this conference representing not only HKU Department of Family Medicine, but also Hong Kong's primary healthcare, was indeed an invaluable experience.

Our team of 2 HKU medical students have been working under Professor Cindy Lam (HKU Head of Department of Family Medicine and Primary Care) and Dr Esther Yu (Clinical Assistant Professor) as student research assistants. As a part of the research team, we conduct research focusing on the Impact of a Health Empowerment Program to improve health outcomes of working poor families in Hong Kong regularly assist in data collection every week on Saturday (6 hours per week) at Tung Chung and Kwai Chung working with low income families.

Based on this research, we co-authored and submitted a poster presentation of our research project, “Impact of a Health Empowerment Program on Self-Care Enablement and Health Outcomes of Working Poor Families in Hong Kong”, to the NAPCRG Annual Meeting 2019. Out of “more than a thousand submissions”, our submission was one of the ~350 global entries that has received a Letter of Acceptance to present at the conference after vetting from the NAPCRG Board.

The ideology of promoting this Health Empowerment Program is to improve the health-related quality of life and health outcomes of low-income families, through increasing their self-care enablement and

health awareness. Living in a city with one of the largest wealth-gaps in the world, we hoped that our research can shine a light on how low-income individuals experience worse physical, mental and psychosocial health in Hong Kong, and find evidence-based solutions to alleviating the intergenerational effects of poverty. There are potentially significant impacts of this research globally.

Attending this conference was indeed a great learning opportunity. It allowed us to share our findings with leading experts from around the world and allow us to discuss potential ways to further improve our program. Many international experts from around the world, such as the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Singapore and Korea, shared their experiences of conducting health empowerment programmes in their locality, and we discussed the differences in our health systems and the challenges they faced along the way. Our presentation also allowed these international experts to learn more about the Hong Kong primary care framework.

Other than presenting our findings at the conference, we also had the opportunity to attend the plenary sessions and side meetings. The topics were wide-ranging, from developing population health and qualitative methods in primary care research, to using big data and applying complexity sciences to healthcare systems.

We also learnt that modes of primary care in different countries were drastically different, and we listened to the successes and challenges of these primary care systems. This allowed us to reflect on the primary care system in Hong Kong and discuss the current primary care initiatives and challenges in primary care during our team meetings with Professor Lam and Dr Yu.

As stated by the WHO, “Primary Health Care on the Road to Universal Health Coverage”. Primary care will play an important role in achieving quality health care for all around the world in the future. It was indeed such an honour to be able to learn from primary care experts from around the world during the NAPCRG Annual Meeting. We hope that the lessons we learnt will allow us to become more compassionate, competent and holistic doctors in the future. We are truly grateful for the opportunity provided to us by the Chui’s Student Excellence Scheme Ho Wing Hing Talent Fund, and we hope to combine research excellence and moral integrity to serve our community as empathetic medical professionals in the future.





