Social work with UK Chinese: encouraging students to recognise the importance of international social connections

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The argument

When teaching professional social work, ilustratative findings from a recent research study can be used to:

- Expand the idea of international social work
- Demonstrate the idea of "transnational communities"
- Help social work students consider how to better engage with certain communities in the provision of health and social care

CONTEXTS

International Social Work

Field of Practice

- Work for international agencies
- Work with immigrants and refugees

Site for exchanges, links and contacts

Awareness of global issues (e.g. trafficking, transnational adoption)

Midgley Journal of Social Work 1(1) 2001

Contexts: UK Chinese community

Pattern of settlement

Low take- up of social work services (Li, Logan, Yee, & Ng, 1999; Yu, 2009).

- "standard explanations":
  - services are not provided in a culturally appropriate fashion;
  - Chinese are self-reliant within their own ethnic community within the UK to provide required services (Chan, Cole, & Bowpitt, 2007a & b).

THE APPROACH

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What we did

Questionnaire

UK

272

Interviews

UK

71

Interviews

HK   67

The People

Number 272

Male 43% Female 57%

Aged 15 – 91 years (Mean = 46.6; SD = 18.53)

Married 50%

Length of stay in UK 25% less than 10 years 40% 11-30 years.

43% have a degree

FINDINGS

UK Chinese acculturation experience & outcomes

Identities

- UK British
- UK Chinese
- Hong Konger

Social networks

- Local British
- Local compatriots
- Relatives and friends in Hong Kong

Health & Social Care

Power of social networks

- Health α relatives and friends in Hong Kong
- Chinese identity α local compatriots
- British identity α local British
- Psychological integration of dual identities α local compatriots and local British

Self-Reported Health Status

Overall self-reported health status:

- Very Good: 16.5%
- Good: 36.2%
- Acceptable: 40.4%
- Bad: 16%
- Very Bad: 0.8%

Gender was not found to be an influential factor.

Attitude towards Western Medicine

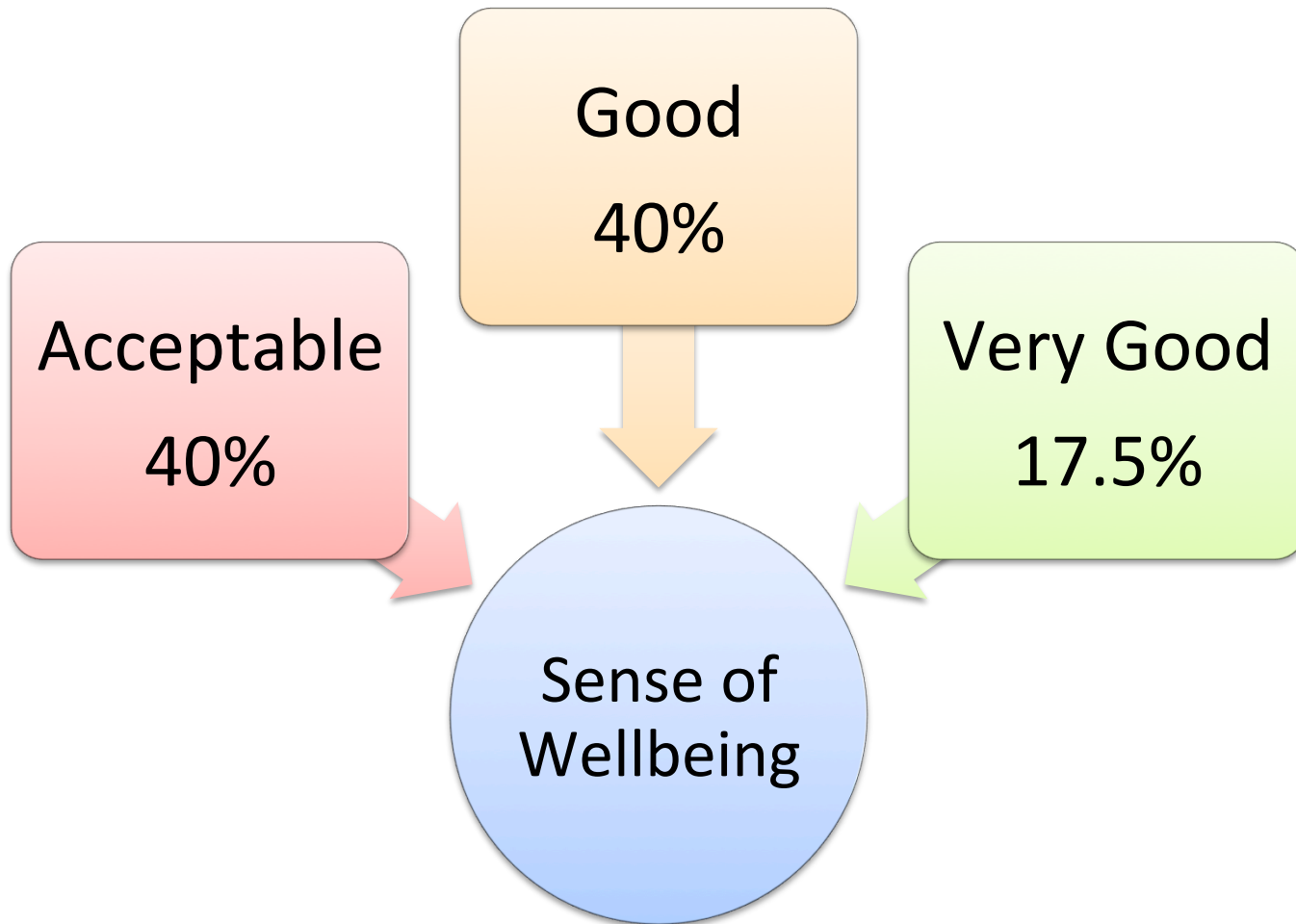The older the respondent, the more favourable their attitude towards WM

Greater affiliation to British culture is predictive of more favourable attitude towards WM

Opinions on Health Service

Easy to get information on health services	58%
Fully involved in deciding services to use/receive	51%
Wide range of services available	61%
Reliable service	61%
Good quality service	61%
Treated with dignity and respect	72%
Received healthcare when needed it most	55%
Understanding of cultural background	33%
Able to use language of choice	39%
Health services used make me feel safer	52%
Health services used enable me to live more independent life	45%
Health services make me feel part of the community	40%
Difficulty communicating with health providers	20%
Don't know where to find health services needed	18%

Sense of satisfaction

Giving Help

- Reasons:
1. sense of filial piety
2. friendship
3. old age problems.
- Amount
  - Up to 10 hours per week (almost half)
  - 11-20 hours per week (a fifth)
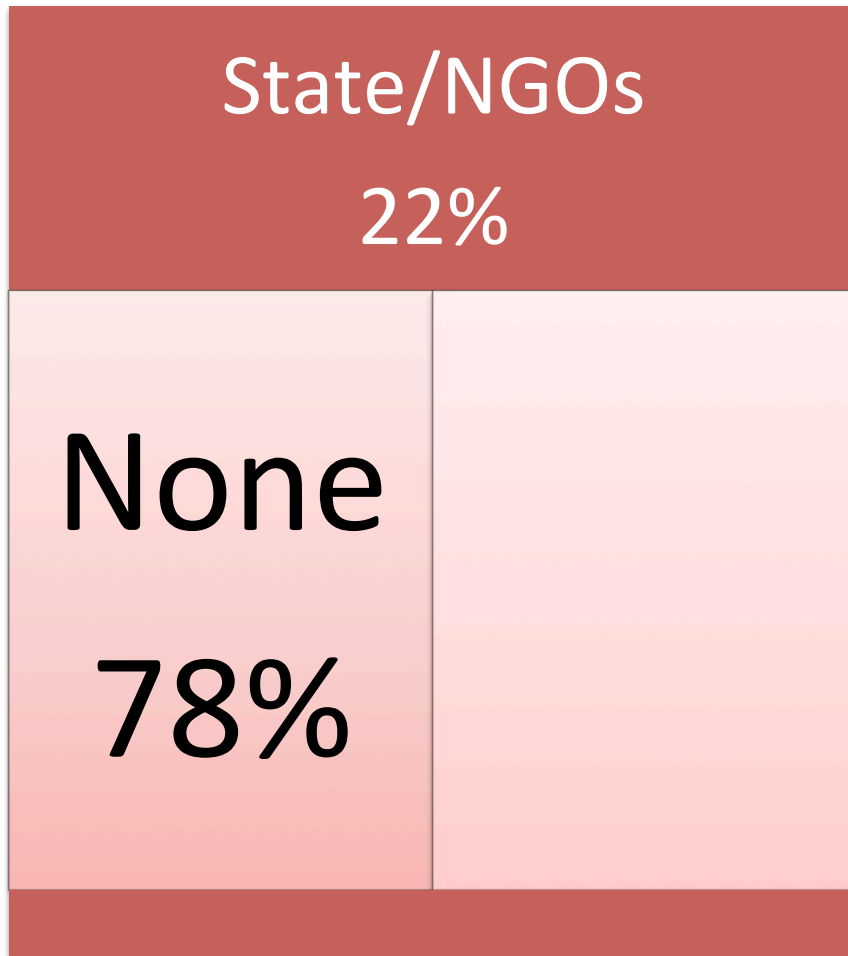- Support to help them 83% family 10% friends

Carers 14%

| Children (Half) | Older people (Third) | Friends (Fifth) |

Getting help

State/NGOs
22%

None
78%

- Mostly older
- More women than men
- 7.5% had a long term problem that required help

Experience of seeking Advice

In the UK

> never consulted a

- Western social worker (Local authority based) (83.2%)
- Western NGO-based social worker (84.8%)
- Chinese social worker (local authority - 86.8%)
- Chinese social worker from an NGO (82.4%).
- an advice worker (74.7%)

> Never sought information either from the Internet (61.2%) or from newspapers (68.4%)

In Hong Kong

> never consulted a

- Western social worker (NGO) 96.7%,
- Chinese social worker local authority (91.4%)
- Chines social worker NGO based (91.4%)
- an advice worker equated to 86.9%

> Never sought information either the Internet (76.2%) or newspapers (79.1%).

Attitudes to Social Care(had used)

About a quarter expressed negative views about their ability to get information about services

Just less than half were complimentary about the broad range of services available and a fifth negative

Around two-thirds thought services reliable

Views of the services were generally complimentary two-thirds thought them good

Six out of ten agreed that they were treated with dignity and respect when using the services, although on sixth were negative about this aspect of their experience;

Opinion was more divided about the extent to which the respondent felt that the services understood important matters concerning their cultural background: almost half had had a positive experience, a third had a negative one.

Influence of others (all in sample)

The vast majority of respondents (92.7%) indicated that it was mostly up to them whether or not they use social care services

How much would you want to follow the suggestion of most people who are important to you?' 23.9% tended to suggest that they would

Conclusions

- These findings add an extra dimension to previous studies, in that they reveal the importance of *global* networks rather than intra-national networks as explanatory factors for the level of usage of formal social services in the UK. There are implications for the professional practice and social work education about how to provide services to a community that has significant reliance on extended international social support networks.

謝謝！
Thank you!