

# Knowledge, Attitude, Practices about Mental Health of the Workforce

September 17, 2014  
(Thursday)



# Joyful (Mental Health) Foundation (JMHF)

- Joyful (Mental Health) Foundation (JMHF) was established in 2004. The Foundation's objectives are to promote the awareness of mental health in the community. JMHF did arouse the concern of the general public about mental health, and to avoid misconceptions and discrimination regarding such illnesses through series of educational activities and promotions.



# Objectives of Study

- Human resource is the core asset of a society. The mental health status of working population requires our attention. Unfortunately, there was no systematic and cross-sectional research in studying the mental illnesses of the workforce.
- Research findings could offer more information regarding the mental health situation of our workforces. A systematic and longitudinal assessment scale is expected to form.



# Collaborators

- Department of Social Work and Social Administration  
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- Faculty of Social Sciences, HKU
- Joyful (Mental Health) Foundation



# Acknowledgement

- The Social Science Research Centre,  
The University of Hong Kong
- International law firm Baker & McKenzie
- Phoenixclub House
- Participants



# Why study mental health at work?

- The WHO has already reported that mental illnesses (such as depression) are the leading causes of disability.
- The report “The Global Economic Burden of Non-communicable Diseases” (2011) by the World Economic Forum estimates the global cost of mental illness at nearly \$2.5T (two-thirds in indirect costs) in 2010, with a projected increase to over \$6T by 2030.
- Poor mental health of the working population = significant economic loss.
- The working population is a significant resource of our society. In mid-2014, the Hong Kong labour force participation rate is 3.90 million, and the Hong Kong GPD per Capita is US\$ 39,200-39,500.
- People’s knowledge, attitude, and practices about mental health at work affect organizations’ practices and policies.

# Major Findings

- Mental health knowledge of the working population is better than anticipated
- Knowing someone with mental health problems at work is fairly common
- Our working population's mental health needs improvement
- Participants who work as Professionals and Elementary workers may need more attention about their mental health
- Our industry loses talents because of inefficiencies of dealing with mental health issues in the workplace. We need to provide better mental health support at workplaces

# Research Issues

- Within the working population in Hong Kong, how much do people know about mental health problem and what to do about it?
- What different occupations, e.g., managers and administrators think about mental health problems and their attitude towards employees with mental health concerns?
- What are the lifestyle and mental health status of the working population in Hong Kong?

# Methodology

- A cross-sectional mobile telephone survey was conducted by the Social Science Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong in Hong Kong between March and June 2014.
- We successfully contacted 4,118 people via their mobile phones, 1,031 eligible participants joined the study.
- Criteria: (i) 18 or above years old, (ii) were employed at or more than 20 hours in the past week.

# Methodology

- The Human Research Ethics Committee for Non-clinical Faculties at HKU approved this study
- This survey is adopted the following questionnaires:
  - Mental health-related knowledge (Mental Health Knowledge Schedule, UK)
  - Mixing with someone with mental health problems (Reported and Intended Behaviour Scale, UK).
  - Employers' knowledge, attitudes and practices towards mental health problems in workplace (Employers' attitude, UK)
  - Life style and mental health concerns screening (Case-finding and Help Assessment Tool, New Zealand)

# Participants

- 653 (58.1%) male
- 55.5% matriculation or higher level of education
- 58.8% individuals had monthly income HK\$15,000 or above (Hong Kong median monthly income= HK\$13,000)



# Participants

Occupation	Population mid-2013	Percentages
Clerks, Service workers and Shop sales workers	30.7%	27.5%
Elementary occupations	20.1%	18.5%
Associate professionals	20.0%	18.3%
Managers and Administrators	10.1%	9.3%
Professionals	7.2%	6.5%
Craft and related workers	6.9%	6.4%
Plant and Machine operators and Assemblers	4.9%	4.5%
Refuse to answer	-	6.6%
Others	0.1	1.2%

# Participants

Industry	HK Census 2011 data	Percentages
Community, Social and Personal Services	25.5%	28.1%
Import/ Export, Wholesale/ Retail	22.7%	11.4%
Finance, Insurance, Estate and Other Commercial Services	19.2 %	15.6%
Transport, Warehouse and Communication	8.9%	11.8%
Hotel & Restaurant	7.9%	7.0%
Construction	7.8%	11.3%
Manufacturing	4.8%	7.5%
Others	-	7.0%

# Findings

- (1) Mental health knowledge of the working population is better than anticipated
- Majority of the working population agreed that mental illness can be helped by psychotherapies.

Knowledge about mental health Items	Answered correctly %
1. Most people with mental health problems want to have paid employment (true)	90.5%
2. If a friend had a mental health problem, I know what advice to give them to get professional help (true)	81.5%
3. Medication can be an effective treatment for people with mental health problems (true)	72.3%
4. Psychotherapy (e.g. talking therapy or counselling) can be an effective treatment for people with mental health problems (true)	95.4%
5. People with severe mental health problems can fully recover (true)	49.5%
6. Most people with mental health problems go to a healthcare professional to get help (false)	64.4%

# Findings

- (2) Knowing someone with mental health problems at work is fairly common
- More than 50% of participants willing to work with people with mental health problem

	Yes	
• Are you currently working with or have you ever worked with someone with a mental health problem?	35.6%	
	Agree	Agree slightly
• In the future , I would be willing to work with someone with a mental health problem.	48.8%	14.3%

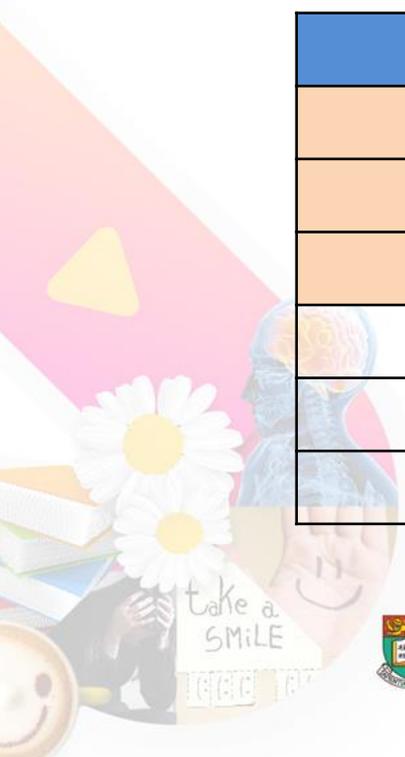


# Findings

## (3) Our working population's mental health needs improvement

- Almost 1/4 of our participants were bothered by feeling down, depressed, or hopeless in the past month;
- Almost 1/3 of our participants were bothered by having little interest or pleasure in doing things and worrying in the past month

	Overall
Depressed	24.1%
Worry	31.3%
Loss Interest	32.2%
Being harmed	9.7%
Being controlled	13.0%
Anger	19.1%



# Findings

(4) Participants who work as Professional and Elementary workers may need more attention about their mental health

Items	Over all	Professionals	Associate Professionals	Clerks etc.	Elementary	Managers
Depressed	24.1	25.7	<b>27.0</b>	22.7	<b>29.3</b>	24.8
Loss Interest	32.2	<b>37.2</b>	27.0	<b>34.3</b>	32.6	<b>34.3</b>
Worry	31.3	<b>34.5</b>	30.6	28.0	<b>33.7</b>	32.4
Anger	19.1	<b>22.1</b>	19.8	14.8	19.6	12.4
Lack of Exercise	48.1	45.1	45.9	<b>50.7</b>	44.6	<b>51.4</b>



# Findings

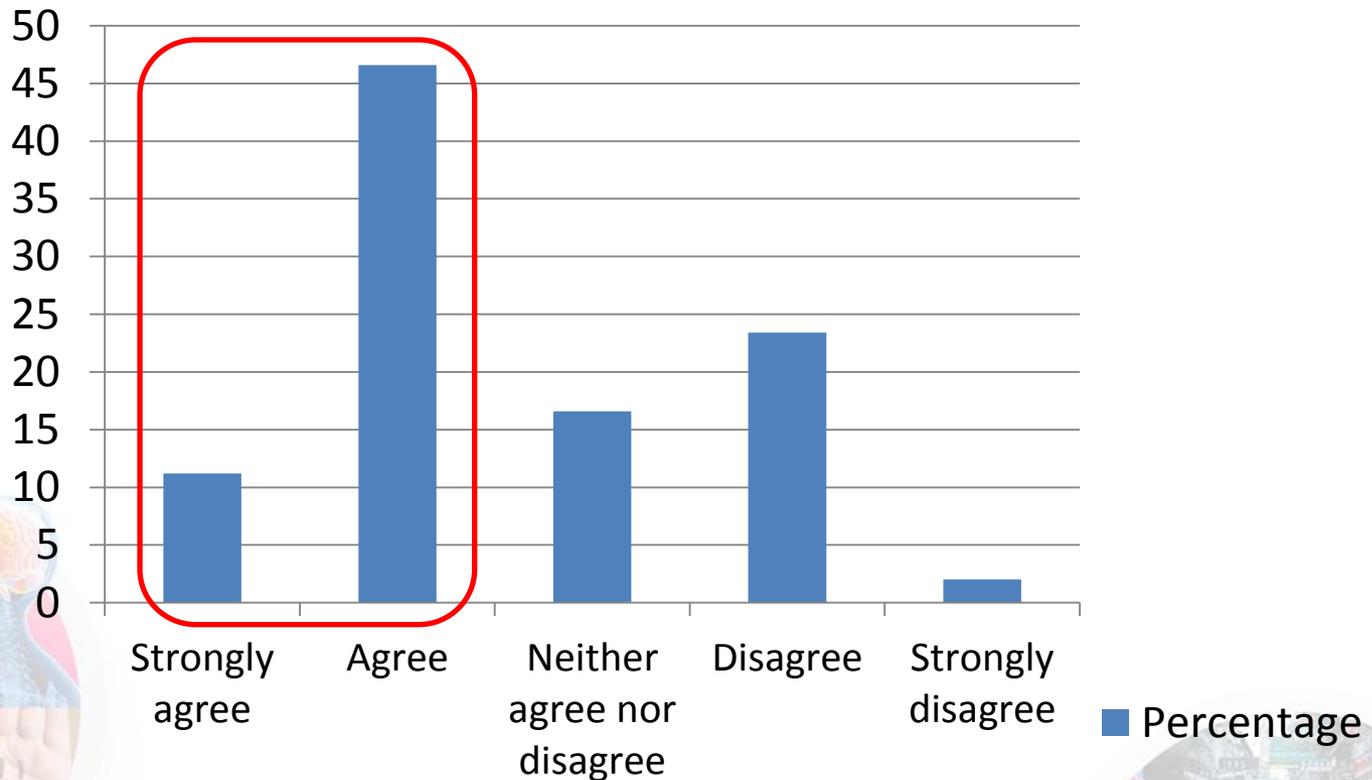
(5) The attitudes of Managers and Administrators towards mental illness were?

Items (Agree and Slightly agree)	Overall % (Agree & Slightly agree)	Managers and Administrators (Agree & Slightly agree)
1. Organizations take a significant risk when employing people with mental health problems in a public/client-facing role	58.2%	62.9%
2. Negative attitudes from co-workers are a major barrier to employing people with mental health problems	63.2%	62.9%
3. People with mental health problems are less reliable than other employees	29.7%	36.2%
4. We would be flexible in offering adjustments or accommodations to someone with mental ill health	78.8%	75.7%

# Findings

(6) Our industry loses talents because of inefficiencies of dealing with mental health issues in the workplace (Strongly agree & Agree: 57.8%)

Percentage

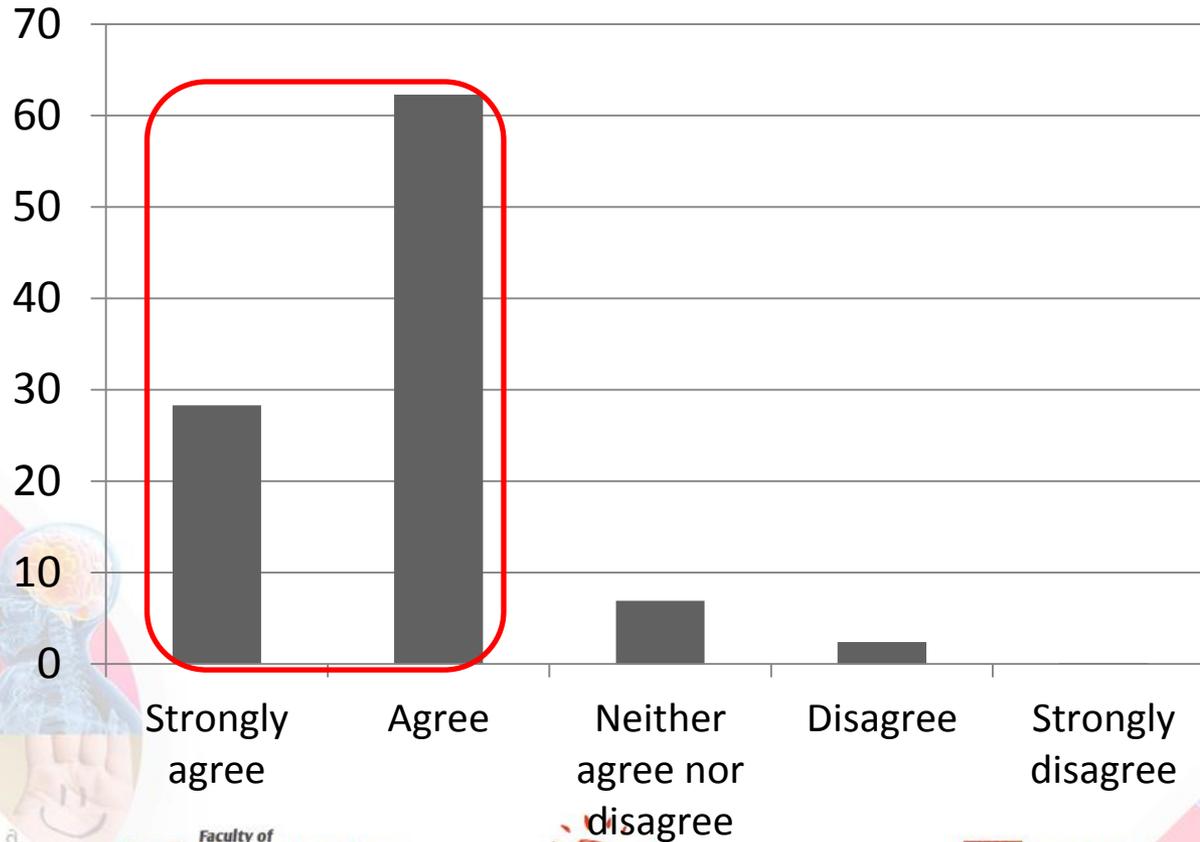


# Findings

(7) We need to provide better mental health support at workplaces

(Strongly agree and Agree = 90.6%)

Percentage



■ Percentage

# Recommendations

- Set up a monitoring standard about knowledge, attitude, and practices towards mental health and the mental health status of the public to provide reliable data for policy planning.
- Establish more mental-health friendly working environment and policies to promote a healthy lifestyle for employees.
- Encourage more multi-sectorial collaboration, i.e., academic, corporate, NGOs, in creating more support and opportunities for people with mental health issues at different stages.

# Q & A



# Sharing Session



# Thank You

