



Ms. Priscilla Poon Yee-hung

President
Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association

Ms. Priscilla POON is President of the Hong Kong Physiotherapy Association since 2009. She is currently working as the New Territories West Cluster co-ordinator of Physiotherapy Services / Department Manager of Physiotherapy of the Tuen Mun Hospital, Hospital Authority, Hong Kong.

Ms. POON is specialized in musculoskeletal rehabilitation, manual therapy and functional capacity evaluation. She has various poster and oral presentations on sports injury, fracture rehabilitation, functional evaluation for post-surgical back pain patients and management model for patients suffering from low back pain. She also participated in the commissioning service of physiotherapy departments in various hospitals. She recently adopted the state-of-the-art treatment strategies of early screening of patients with significant psychosocial factors and application of Cognitive Behavioural-based Approach in subsequent management for those with significant psychosocial yellow-flags. She collaborated with the orthopaedic surgeons to improve the pre- & post-operative rehabilitative care for patients with spinal surgeries. She also extended her scope of practice from musculoskeletal rehabilitation to the management of constipation since April 2009 to enhance the care for constipated clients. Recently, she is also engaged in service planning for enhancing physiotherapy in geriatric care in her workplace.

Apart from clinical and administrative duty, she also conducted various clinical researches, paper presentations in local conferences and paper publications on various clinical areas including sports injuries, musculoskeletal rehabilitation, physiotherapy in primary care service, cardiac & pulmonary rehabilitation, elderly care and non-cancer palliative care.

Moreover, Ms. POON has attained Outstanding Academic Achievement in Master of Science in Health Care (Physiotherapy). She also awarded with Outstanding Team Award in 2007 related to Occupational Medicine and Care Service in New Territories West Cluster, Hospital Authority. She is also one of the team members of the Outstanding Team Award – Ottawa Orthopaedic Project in 2001.

Physiotherapy to Enhance Active Ageing

Evidence well established that aging was associated with a progressive decline in muscle strength, muscle mass, and aerobic capacity, which reduced mobility and impaired quality of life in elderly adults. Furthermore, elderly falls were also common due to the effect of aging on cognitive and physiological functioning. Moreover, various metabolic diseases, such as hypertension, diabetes and osteoporosis will bring in sufferings to the aged population. According to the World Confederation of Physical Therapy, the benefits of physical activity include primary and secondary prevention of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, specific cancers (in particular breast and colon cancer) and osteoporosis.

Physiotherapy helps older people to remain active as they age. It also helps older people to prevent chronic disease. Exercise can be implemented to improve muscle function and teaching elders with long-term aerobic exercise that will improve cardiorespiratory and metabolic benefits. This thus helps to reduce the chance of cardiovascular disease and osteoporosis. In addition, exercise will also help to control the glucose control of diabetes clients, thus minimizing the diabetes-induced complications. Exercise program can also improve physical performance and gait parameters, which are important for fall prevention. With improved muscular strength, endurance and flexibility, the risk of fall will also be minimized.

Apart from decline in muscular strength and endurance with aging, it was reported that elders without dementia but with subjective memory complaints or mild cognitive impairment were considered at increased risk of cognitive decline. Vascular risk factors including hypertension, heart disease, smoking, hypercholesterolemia and lack of physical activity have been identified as modifiable risk factors contributing to cognitive decline and cognitive impairment. There were growing strong evidence of clinical trials demonstrated the benefits of physical activity for the elderly in maintaining cognitive function.

It was well known that elders were influenced by arthritis due to pain & physical disability. Various researches indicated that painful condition could be controlled by pursuing a variety of exercise regimens with comprehensive individualized assessment, active patient involvement in the decision-making process, and long-term monitoring. It was concluded that life-long exercise was crucial for maximizing the well-being and function of adults with arthritis.

In conclusion, physiotherapy facilitates the active aging process, by enabling the elderly to enhance their physical and mental health.