

Changes in psychosocial well-being of older people in Hong Kong: Findings from four cross-sectional population-wide surveys from 2017 to 2020

Anson Kai Chun Chau¹, Eric TC Lai^{1,2}, Jean Woo^{1,2,3}

¹ Institute of Health Equity, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong SAR, China
² Department of Medicine and Therapeutics, Faculty of Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China
³ Jockey Club Institute of Ageing, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

Background & Objectives:

- ❖ Hong Kong, a densely populated city in China, has the longest life expectancy in the world (males: 83.2 years; females: 87.9 years, 2021).
- ❖ Despite plenty of efforts to monitor life expectancy and physical health, **changes in psychosocial well-being among older people in Hong Kong** have been rarely examined and documented.
- ❖ Hong Kong witnessed social unrest in 2019 and the outbreak of COVID-19 disease in 2020. However, few studies have investigated their impact on psychosocial well-being in older people.
- ❖ Tracking changes in the psychosocial well-being of Hong Kong's older people is important for the understanding of the **progression of healthy ageing and health equity**.
- ❖ Therefore, based on **four cross-sectional population-wide surveys** in Hong Kong from 2017 to 2020, the current study aimed to examine:
 - ❖ Changes in various indicators of psychosocial well-being in older people
 - ❖ If sociodemographic characteristics moderated these changes over the years

Methods:

Sample:

Hong Kong residents aged ≥ 60 years recruited from a random sample of households via **population-wide telephone surveys conducted annually from 2017 to 2020**

Measures:

Psychosocial well-being:

- ❖ **Psychological distress:** Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6)
- ❖ **Loneliness:** 3-item UCLA Loneliness Scale
- ❖ **Life satisfaction:** 'Overall, how satisfied are you with life as a whole these days?'

Sociodemographic characteristics: age, gender, educational attainment, working status, living arrangement, housing type, & subjective socioeconomic status

Analysis:

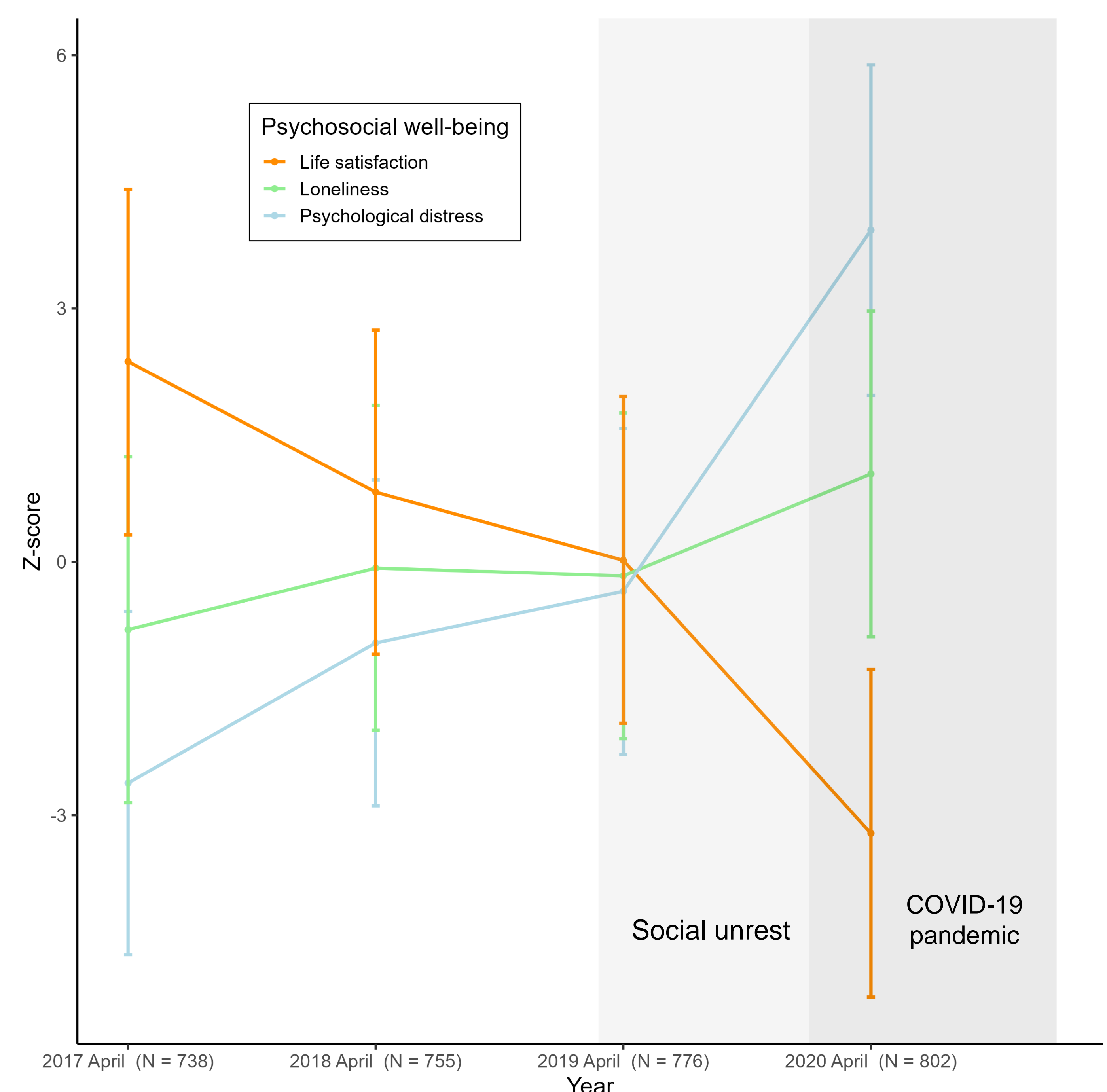
Changes in psychological well-being measures across years (2017 as baseline) were tested with **linear regression analyses**

- ❖ Sociodemographic characteristics as covariates
- ❖ Sampling weights were incorporated

Whether the changes in scores were modified by sociodemographic variables was assessed with the respective **interaction term with year**

Results:

- ❖ **Regression analyses** suggested:
 - ❖ **Increases in psychological distress** from 2017 to:
 - ❖ 2019 ($B = 0.56$, $p = .030$, 5% increase)
 - ❖ 2020 ($B = 1.63$, $p < .001$, 13% increase)
 - ❖ **Decreases in life satisfaction** from 2017 to:
 - ❖ 2019 ($B = -0.23$, $p = .026$, 3% decrease)
 - ❖ 2020 ($B = -0.55$, $p < .001$, 9% decrease)
 - ❖ **Unclear changes in loneliness** ($p = .235$)
- ❖ **Moderation analyses** suggested:
 - ❖ Across the years, **more prominent increases in psychological distress** among those with **higher education attainment** (p for interaction = .048)
 - ❖ Tertiary education vs no formal education: +22%
 - ❖ Senior secondary vs no formal education: +23%



*Raw scores were converted into Z-scores for visualization in this plot

Conclusions:

- ❖ A deterioration in mental health and life satisfaction in Hong Kong's older people was evident from 2017 to 2020, with more prominent changes observed from 2019 and onwards.
- ❖ Our findings call for interventions and policies to promote the psychosocial well-being of its older people, as well as continual assessments to monitor the short-term changes and long-term trends in multiple facets of well-being.

COI Disclosure

We have no financial relationships to disclose.

Acknowledgement

This study was supported by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and the CUHK Vice Chancellor's Discretionary Fund.