Enhancing Mental Health Help Seeking and Service Use: Identifying Effective Approaches through Survey Experiments

Abstract

The state of mental health in Hong Kong and Mainland China is gaining growing attention due to rising economic and societal pressures, as well as the impact of Covid-19. Although a number of initiatives have been introduced to establish and enhance community-based patient-centered psychiatric services, seeking professional help for emotional or mental problems is still not a common practice among Chinese people. Developing mental health interventions and services that align with patient preferences is a critical component of patient-centered care: it improves both uptake and outcomes. To be sustainable, mental health services must incorporate the preferences of patients, family members, and mental health professionals. What kind of mental health services would Chinese people prefer and choose when experiencing emotional or mental health problems? What might be the effective approaches to encourage help seeking and service use? In this seminar, Professor Juan Chen will share results from online surveys we conducted in 2022-23, employing discrete choice experiment (DCE) design, with adults in Hong Kong (N=1000), adults in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen (N=4000), young adults (18-24) in Beijing and Shenzhen (N=4000), and community health professionals in Shenzhen (expected N=1000). The findings suggest practice interventions that aim to enhance the provision and quality of community mental health services. The research also provides insights for policy decision to more effectively allocate resources in establishing and improving the mental health care systems.