

Pilot project of developing a new  
**multidisciplinary** psychosocial day program  
for managing anxiety and depression in  
**patients and caregivers**  
at **Palliative Care** Unit

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# Background:

## Complex Psychosocial Needs in PC

- WHO definition of Palliative Care (PC)
  - “...improves the quality of life of **patients and their families** facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, **physical, psychosocial** and spiritual.”

(WHO, 2015)

# Objective:

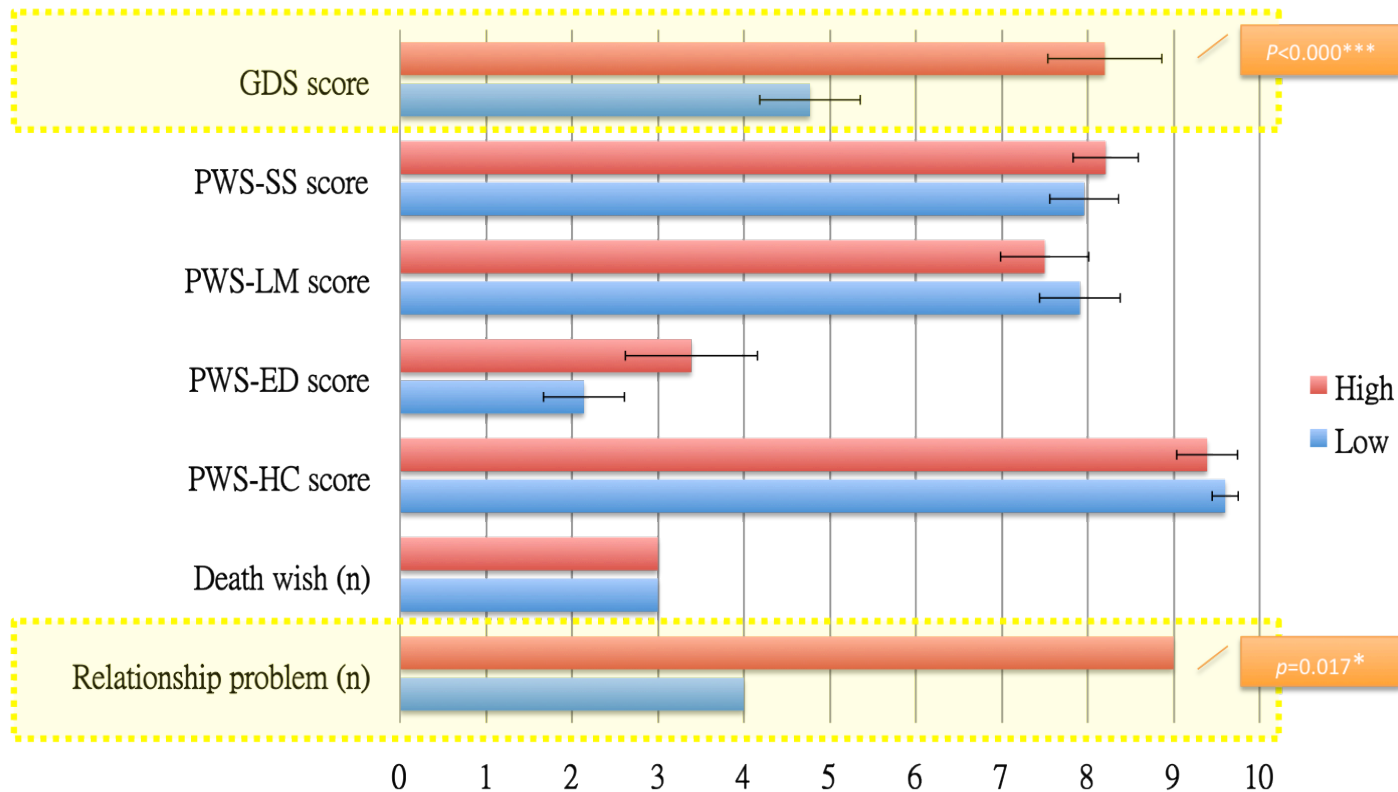
1. Retrospective analyses of data obtained by Psychology Assistants
  - Physical symptoms & psychological well-being in PC outpatients
  - Psychological well-being and relationship difficulties in outpatients and caregivers
2. Way forward:
  - New Multidisciplinary Psychosocial Program

# Results from Retrospective Analyses:

## 1. PHYSICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL

↑ physical symptoms: ↑ depressive symptoms ( $p < 0.000^{***}$ )

↑ report relationship problems ( $p = 0.017^*$ )



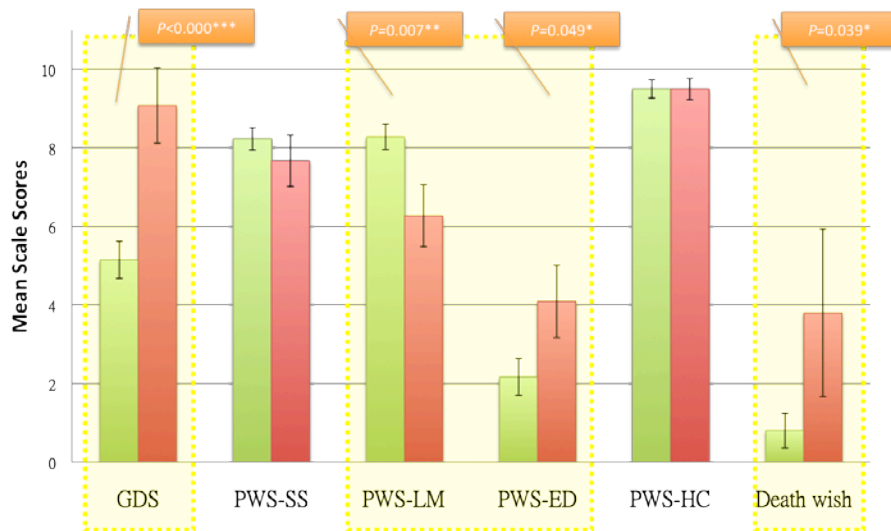
Notes: GDS: Geriatric Depression Scale; PWS-SS: Social Support subscale on PWS; PWS-LM: Life Meaning subscale on PWS; PWS-ED: Emotional Distress subscale on PWS; PWS-HC: Hospital Care subscale on PWS

# Results from Retrospective Analyses:

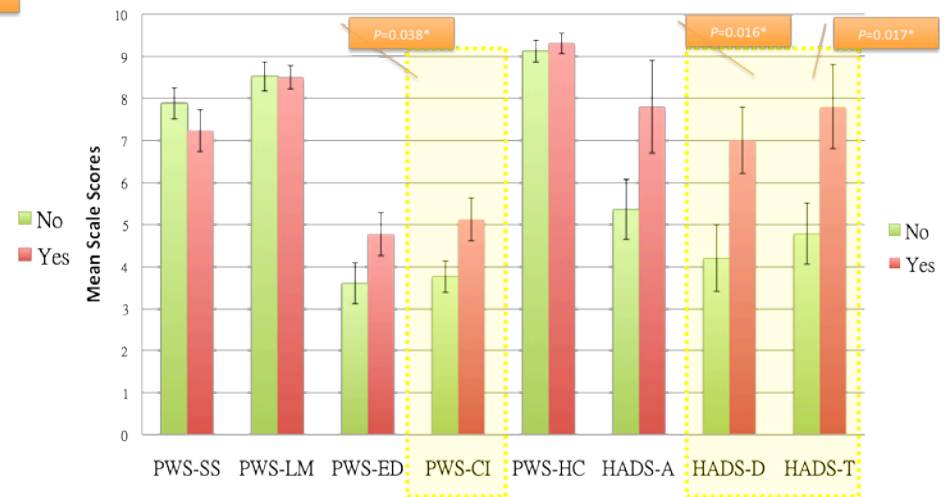
## 2. PATIENTS & CAREGIVERS

- **↑ pain in patients → ↑ caregiver's emotional distress ( $p=.043^*$ )**
- **Relationship difficulties**
  - **↑ death wish in patients**
  - **↑ psychological distress in both patients and caregivers**

### PATIENTS



### CAREGIVERS



Notes: GDS: Geriatric Depression Scale; PWS-SS: Social Support subscale on PWS; PWS-LM: Life Meaning subscale on PWS; PWS-ED: Emotional Distress subscale on PWS; PWS-CI: Carer Inadequacy subscale on PWS; PWS-HC: Hospital Care subscale on PWS; HADS-A: Anxiety subscale on HADS; HADS-D: Depression subscale on HADS; HADS-T: Total scores on HADS (divided by 2).

# New program to address complex needs

- **One-stop, multidisciplinary** (Strasser et al., 2004)
  - Clinical Psychologist (CP) + Physiotherapist (PT)
- **Patients *and* Caregivers**
  - Relationship and communication issues
- **Evidence-based interventions for Depression & Anxiety**
  - Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (Butler et al., 2006; Daniels, 2015)
  - Exercise (Kim et al., 2012; Quist et al., 2015)

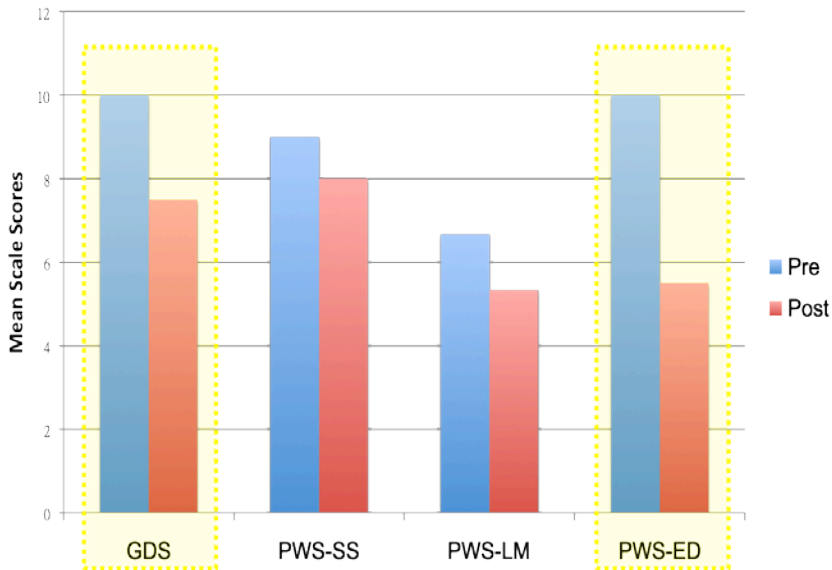
## PILOT PROJECT:

- **4-session** program to manage anxiety and depression in outpatients and their caregivers
  - **CP:** Emotion regulation and tolerance;  
Relationship and communication issues
  - **PT:** Individualized home-based exercise program

# Positive Treatment Outcome

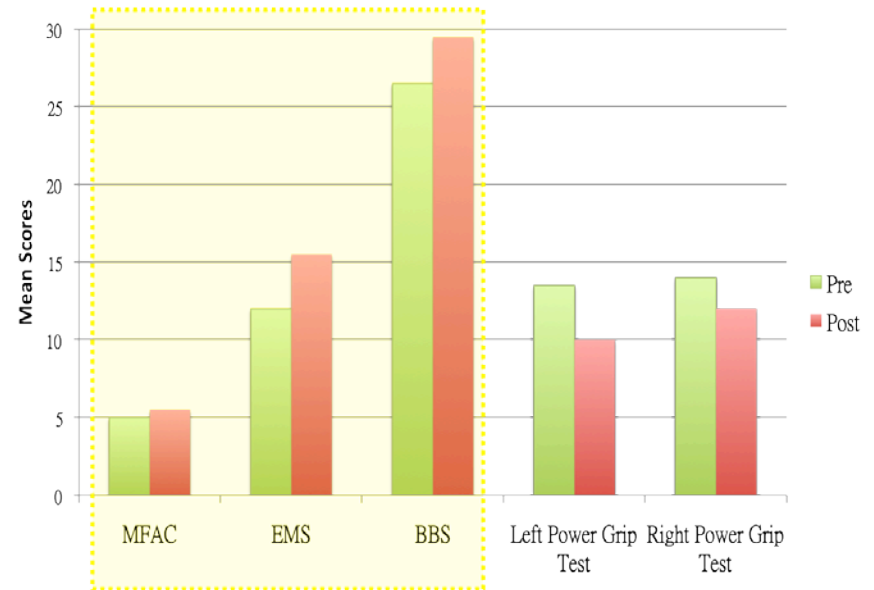
## Psychological well-being

- Reduced depressive symptoms and emotional distress



## Physical functioning

- Improved mobility and balance



- **Positive** feedback was also received from patients from Client Satisfaction Survey

*Notes: GDS: Geriatric Depression Scale; PWS-SS: Social Support subscale on PWS; PWS-LM: Life Meaning subscale on PWS; PWS-ED: Emotional Distress subscale on PWS. MFAC: Modified Functional Ambulation Category; EMS: Elderly Mobility Scale; BBS: Berg Balance Scale.*

# Limitation & Conclusion

## Limitation

- **Methodology of retrospective analyses:** current results were based on symptoms reported in unstructured interview; some symptoms may be overlooked / underreported
- **Treatment outcome:** very small sample size (only 2 patients completed); limited involvement of caregivers.

## Conclusion

- Psychosocial needs in patients and caregivers at PCU are **complex**.
  - Significant interaction between **patients' physical and psychological functioning**
  - Their overall well-being and quality of life are **highly interrelated** (E.g. relationship difficulties were highly associated with increased psychological distress)
- One-stop and time-limited **multidisciplinary day program** with evidence-based interventions could be an **effective and efficient** way to address such complex needs.



# Acknowledgement

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- Ms. Siu-Hong SHUM, Clinical Psychologist
- Ms. Emily TSANG, Physiotherapist
- Palliative Care Unit, Department of Medicine & Geriatrics, Caritas Medical Centre
- Department of Clinical Psychology, Caritas Medical Centre

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Thank You!

Q&A