

## **CALL FOR PAPERS | Leisure for Older Adults in Asia**

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Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

February 15, 2020

Location:

Singapore

Subject Fields:

Demographic History / Studies, Health and Health Care, Humanities, Social History / Studies, Southeast Asian History / Studies

**DATE OF EVENT : 10-11 September 2020**

**VENUE : National University of Singapore**

**WEBSITE : <https://ari.nus.edu.sg/events/leisure-for-older-adults/>**

### **CALL FOR PAPERS DEADLINE: 15 FEBRUARY 2020**

The goal of this international conference is to holistically examine leisure engagements by older participants in Asia (from 55 years old and above), the socio-economic and cultural factors that influence their leisure lifestyles (eg. family structures and relationships, class, ethnicity, region, etc.), and the implications and effects leisure participation has on both participants and their socio-economic and cultural environments. Leisure activities that are being looked at in this conference include, but are not limited to: sports, physical and mental games, music, arts and crafts, language learning, and others.

In increasingly ageing Asian urban societies, the question of how older people can find sources of well-being and meaning, and create fulfilling lifestyles and identities, is increasingly crucial. As sharp advancements in medical technology, nutrition and living standards have led to increased life expectancies now averaging over 80 years, today's older population are the first to experience old age in extremely large numbers, and are poised to enjoy life post-retirement for up to thirty years, much longer than their predecessors. The demographic context in which they will live their later years is thus vastly different from that in which they had previously lived through.

Furthermore, their experience of old age now occurs in vastly different family relations from before. For example, more older adults are experiencing "empty nest syndrome" earlier with the increasing norm in regional and transnational mobility among their children, who move out to study, work and/or marry. There are many who have to take on a role as the primary caregiver for their spouses and/or aging parents, constituting part of what has been termed the "sandwich generation". More older adults are also living alone, with increasing trends of singlehood, divorce and widowhood.

This international conference explores the leisure participation of older Asians within these changing contexts, and sees how family, demographic, health factors affect leisure activities (and vice versa).

Although popular and academic discourse on older populations in many Asian societies largely focus on them as frail, passive and dependent recipients of care and support, more recent discourse is beginning to recognize the diversity in health and identity negotiation in later life. These studies incorporate varied approaches that foreground the viewpoint of the people undergoing the process of growing old, and investigate their concerns over meaning, direction, engagement, commitment and well-being in old age.

This international conference tackles such questions of meaning and well-being in old age from the perspective of leisure, which is taken as both the experience of satisfaction and fulfilment, and the activities that bring about this experience. This is because many aged urban residents in Asia engage in leisure activities regularly to construct senses of meaning, direction and well-being in old age. Such regular participation in leisure activities can be understood as a kind of “serious leisure”, an unpaid, yet “systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity sufficiently substantial, interesting and fulfilling in nature for the participant to find a career there acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience” (Stebbins 2015: xx). Some leisure activities that are regularly enjoyed by older participants include: karaoke, golf, dancing, craftwork, mahjong, gardening, and others.

In contributing to the nascent literature on the intersection between leisure and ageing, this international conference seeks to bring together research from across Asia on older leisure activities in rapidly ageing urban areas, including but not limited to Singapore, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Thailand and others. We welcome empirical and conceptual papers dealing with both comparative and in-situ studies of older leisure. The following are some potential themes that can be addressed, although it is not an exhaustive list and the conference is open to innovative approaches:

#### 1. Life course, family relations and leisure practices of mature adults

- How and why do some leisure activities increasingly involve older participants?
- What are the family circumstances and life course contexts in which older Asians take part in leisure activities?
- Why do some leisure activities appear more attractive to older participants?
- How does the increasing number of older participants change practices in certain leisure activities?
- How do leisure activities “grow old together” with ageing participants?

#### 2. Leisure and health in old age

- How does the advanced stage of life enable or inhibit older Asians’ motivations and physical/mental ability to participate in particular leisure activities?
- How do leisure engagements provide opportunities and means for participants to mould and reshape their physical and cognitive faculties and comport?
- How do leisure engagements influence attitudes towards mortality and death?

#### 3. Social images of participating in leisure in old age

- How do older Asians conceptualise leisure participation, particularly in relation to their earlier life experiences and current life stage?
- How do normative socio-cultural understandings of life in old age enable or inhibit older Asians’ motivations and ability to participate in leisure activities?

- What kinds of leisure activities are considered more desirable than others, and why?

4. Social networks and communities of leisure in old age

- What kinds of social networks and structures do participants construct through their leisure engagements?
- How are social networks and organisations constructed through leisure engagements, and how do they relate to the older participants' existing relationships?
- What are the effects of leisure communities on the older participants' lifestyles?

5. Leisure and well-being in old age

- What meanings do participants attribute to the leisure activities that they engage in?
- Why do the participants choose their preferred leisure activity/activities to attain well-being and meaning?
- What is the relationship between changing family structures/relationships and leisure participation?
- How do leisure engagements figure in the construction of older identities and lifestyles in the various socio-economic and cultural environments, and provide senses of well-being and meaning?

## SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Paper proposals should include a title, an abstract (250 words) and a brief personal biography (150 words) for submission by **15 February 2020**. Please note that only previously unpublished papers or those not already committed elsewhere can be accepted. The organizers plan to publish a special journal issue that incorporates some selected papers presented at the conference. By participating in the conference, you agree to participate in the future publication plans of the organizers. Hotel accommodation and a contribution towards airfare will be provided for accepted paper participants (one author per paper).

Please submit your proposal using the provided [template](#) to Ms Minghua Tay at [minghua.tay@nus.edu.sg](mailto:minghua.tay@nus.edu.sg). Notifications of acceptance will be sent out by **15 March 2020**. Participants will be required to send in a completed draft paper (5,000 words) by **11 August 2020**.

## WORKSHOP CONVENORS

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