

***Self Care, Family-Based Caregiving, and Community Care-Seeking Behavior Among Elderly Chinese in Canada***

As the global life expectancy continues to rise and the fertility rate continues to decline, many countries will be forced to cope with the impacts of populations with a high percentage of elderly residents. This major demographic shift will generate changes that will span across social, economic, cultural and political boundaries. This research project seeks to understand the socio-cultural factors that influence the daily lifestyles and health seeking behavior of elderly Chinese. In addition, it seeks to understand the ways in which elderly Chinese utilize self care and public health care resources and what role the family plays in elder care in Chinese communities. Using interviews from Dr. Jeanne Shea's Montreal Chinese Interview Project (MCIP) and research papers from other anthropological and gerontological studies, most notably those of Chinese Canadian gerontologist Dr. Daniel Lai, I will examine the lifestyle, health care seeking, and familial and extra-familial caregiving resources found among elderly Chinese who reside in Canada. This is an ongoing research endeavor and thus this presentation will merely seek to give a general outline of the trends and patterns that I have observed to date in the in-depth interviews conducted by Dr. Shea in Montreal in comparison with the data collected by Dr. Lai in seven cities across Canada. This information will be beneficial to countries like the United States and Canada that have large multi-ethnic populations. These nations will need to better understand the distinct patterns of care-seeking and the particular caregiving resources available and not available to the diverse populations in order to better empower individuals and families and improve extrafamilial, community, health care, and long term care resources.