

傳媒報導

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Elderly told to be physically active

The elderly who do regular physical exercises and mental training are more likely to remain healthy. SINGTAO

Hilary Wong

Nearly two-thirds of those over 65 are frail and weak and prone to disease, a survey shows.

The study was conducted jointly by the Chinese University of Hong Kong's Centre for Gerontology and Geriatrics and the Hong Kong Jockey Club Cadenza Hub from April to October last year. A total of 816 elderly, aged 65 or above, were involved.

Professor Jean Woo Ling-fong, chair of the Department of Medicine and Therapeutics, said frailty is a clinically recognized state of increased vulnerability.

It is subdivided into physical frailty and cognitive frailty which may lead to sarcopenia or the gradual loss of skeletal muscle and strength that occurs with ageing, and some de-

gree of cognitive impairment. The survey found that 13 percent of the respondents were frail, 52 percent were pre-frail and 35 percent were robust. It also found an increasing prevalence of frailty with age.

Five percent of respondents, aged between 65 and 69, were frail; in the 70-74 age bracket it rose to 7.7 percent, and 16.8 percent for those aged 75 or above.

The study shows those who are frail have three chronic diseases on average and receive more than four medications compared with 2.23 sicknesses and three medications for those considered pre-frail.

Ruby Yu Ho-yan, research assistant professor, said the survey also showed the elderly with a higher physical activity level were less likely to become frail.

Depression was more prevalent among the

frail (28.9 percent) than the pre-frail (11 percent).

Woo said frailty is not an inevitable consequence of aging.

"Older people who maintain regular physical exercises and cognitive training are more likely to remain healthy and live independently," Woo said.

Woo said physical frailty is reversible because muscle training can slow down the body's decline.

Those over 50 are encouraged to join a 12-week program by the Cadenza Hub to prevent frailty. Ivy, a 55-year-old taking part, said that three years ago her knees hurt and she avoided going out. She later joined the muscle training program and can now go shopping or stand for an hour or longer.

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