

1st
WORLD
CONGRESS



19 – 22 March, 2012
ON HEALTHY AGEING

www.healthyageingcongress.org

Organised by:



Malaysian Healthy Ageing Society

Co-Sponsored:



World Health
Organization

Population Aging in Asia: Challenges to Family Support for Ensuring a Healthy Aging Lifecourse



**JAMES W. MCNALLY, PH.D.
DIRECTOR, NACDA PROGRAM ON AGING**

**THE NATIONAL ARCHIVE
OF COMPUTERIZED DATA ON AGING
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104 USA
NACDA@ICPSR.UMICH.EDU**

Disclaimers and Conflicts



***You have an Absolute
Obligation to Your Elders.***

***(Anyone who says differently is
probably selling something.)***

OBJECTIVES



- The inter-relationships of modernization, development and the demographic transition can inform planning for the care of elderly populations.
- Solutions attempted by some nations such as South Korea, Singapore and Japan use Western based models driven by the *immediate needs* of a large elderly population. This was a reactive approach rather than a proactive one.
- Challenges facing nations where the elderly make up less than 10% of the total population, including Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam have time to plan for the future. Some nations can learn from past mistakes and proactively avoid repeating them.

Burden, Process, Obligation or Gift?



“Getting old is a natural process where things begin to slow down as you become beautiful in a way that's not achievable in youth.” (Successful Aging)



Thinking About Successful Aging



**MEASUREMENT
CONCEPTS
MODELS**

Studies on Aging in the Asia Region



- China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study (CHARLs)
- Japanese Study of Aging and Retirement (JSTAR)
- Korean Longitudinal Study of Ageing (KLoSA)
- Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI)
- Study on global AGEing and Adult Health (SAGE)

AVAILABLE FROM THE NACDA PROGRAM ON AGING

- Study 3800: Survey of Aging and Intergenerational Relations in Baoding City [China], 1994
- Study 3891: Chinese Longitudinal Healthy Longevity Survey (CLHLS), 1998-2002
- Study 24901: Chinese Longitudinal Healthy Longevity Survey (CLHLS), 1998-2005
- Study 3792: Social Environment and Biomarkers of Aging Study (SEBAS) in Taiwan, 2000
- Study 2705 : Matlab [Bangladesh] Health and Socioeconomic Survey (MHSS), 1996
- Study 23861: China General Social Survey (China GSS)
- Study 4472: Japanese General Social Surveys (JGSS) Cumulative Data, 2000-200
- Study 3156: Nihon University Japanese Longitudinal Study of Aging (NUJLSOA)
- Study 3407: National Survey of the Japanese Elderly, 1987, 1990 and 1993

Defining Successful Aging



The Western interpretation often revolves around autonomy and growing old in one's home

- "Aging in place" is growing older without having to move.
- According to the *Journal of Housing for the Elderly*, success can be measured by not having to move from one's present residence in order to secure necessary support services in response to changing need.
- Unfortunately the world has a way of changing around you even if you refuse to move with it.

Barrier to Successful Aging: Getting Older



- Early on Martin (1989) argued that coresidence represented the best insurance for elderly to obtain adequate care and support on an ongoing basis.

Unfortunately:

- Studies uniformly show that the disabled face decreased status and power within the household (Bowen, 1964; Rensal and Howard, 1997; and Panapasa, 2002).
- There is also considerable evidence that the quality of care declines as the elderly become impaired and unable to contribute to household economies (Lillard and Willis, 1997; McNally, 2003; Panapasa, Phau and McNally, 2009).

Successful Aging in the West



- Successful Aging in the Western Context is about portable income, pension systems, structured health care and access to personal transportation.
- Successful aging is driven more by income and access to resources than by family support and access to relations.
- Unsuccessful aging is driven by a lack of access to income. This can force dependence on uncertain support networks such as family making elders more vulnerable to poverty, illness and institutionalization.

Successful Aging in the “not-West”



- Aging in a non-Western context often revolves about reciprocal exchanges within the extended family.
- *WHERE you age and WHO you age with* can depend upon your health, productivity and ability to contribute to the broader family unit.
- **THIS CAN BE QUITE SUCCESSFUL....**

Unless You Age too Much:

- Disabled or frail elders are more likely to age alone, in poverty and without reliable support from family.
- **THIS IS NOT SUCCESSFUL....**

Autonomy is not Living Alone



- Successful Aging should be flexible and take many forms.

Still certain fundamentals remain:

- The elderly, by and large, do not want to live with a bunch of old people. They should be fully integrated into the broader community.
- Elderly will often say “they do not want to be a burden on the children”.
- Adult children too rarely say “you cannot be a burden”.
- Language reflects perceptions: Refer to child rearing as “*caretaker burden*” in a journal submission, op-ed piece or public discussion and see where it gets you.

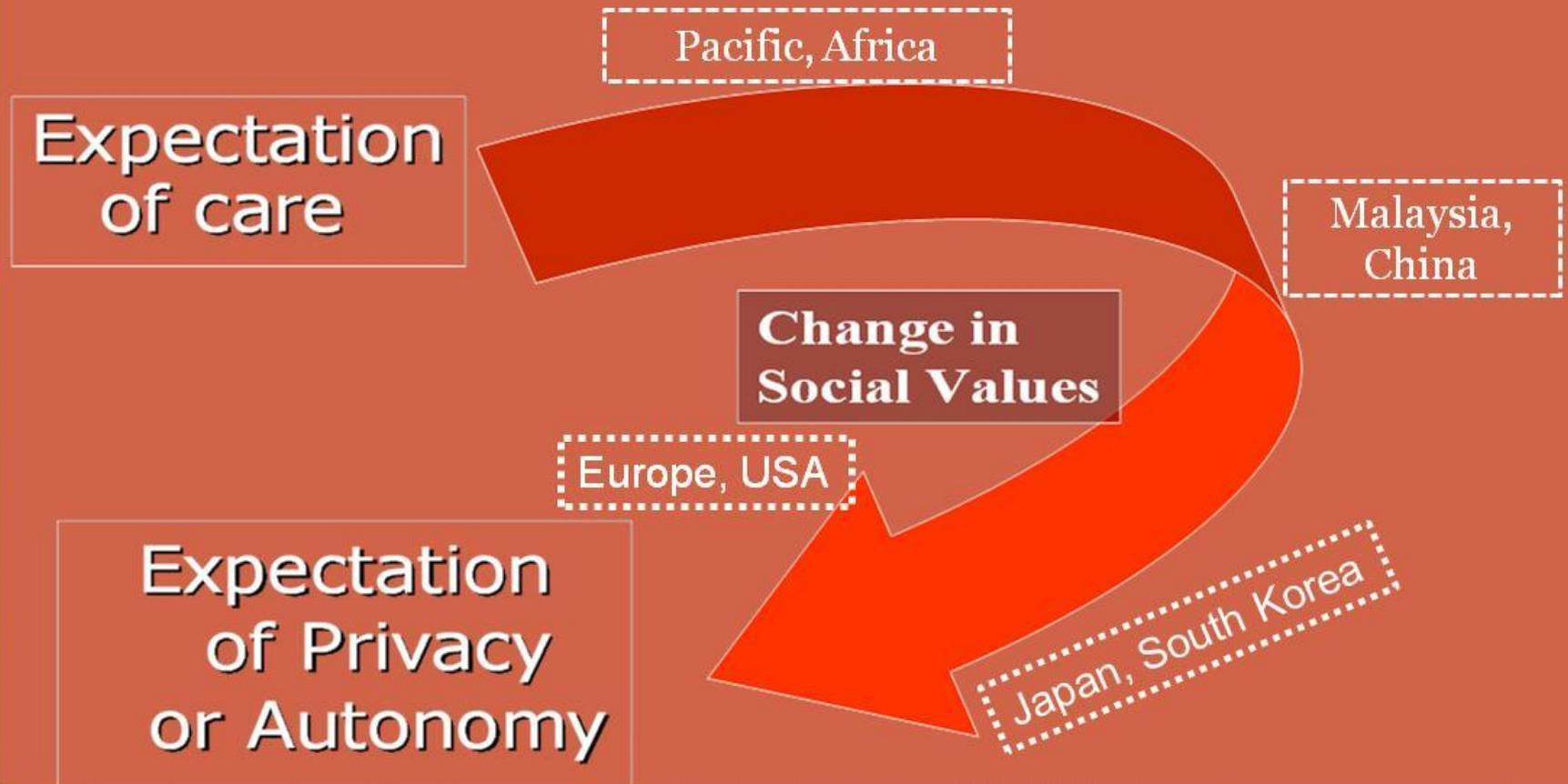
Successful Aging is a Family Matter



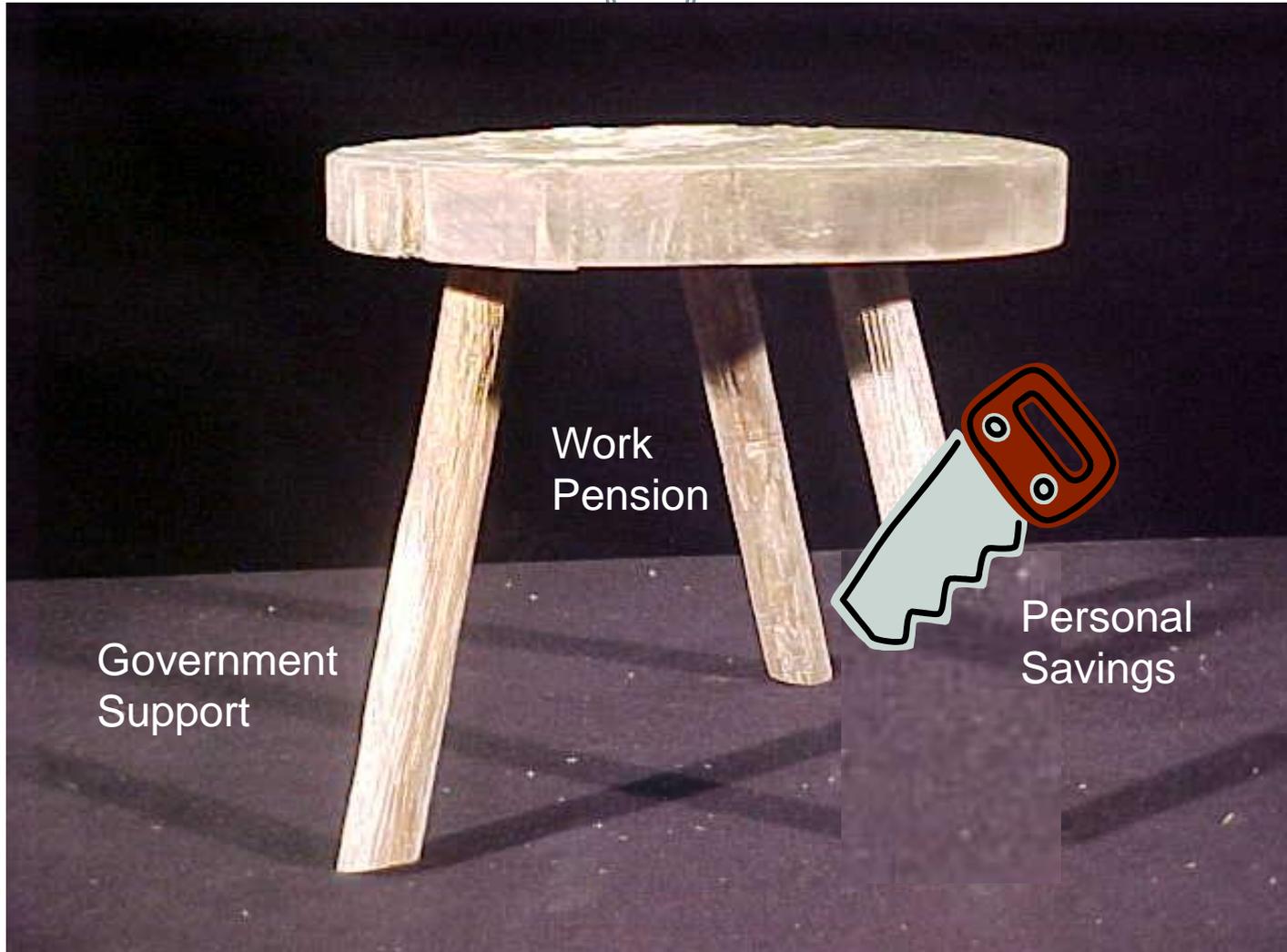
- Successful Aging is very much about the living circumstances of the aged?
 1. Where Do They Live?
 2. Who Do They Live With?
 3. Where Does Their Family Live?

Successful Aging: “Ultimately is about Expectations”

Transitional Phases of Care

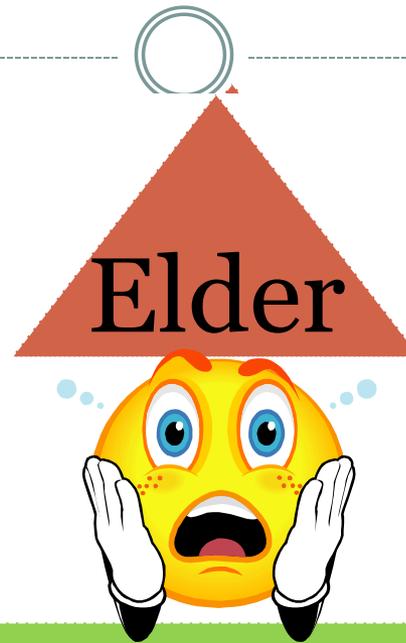


Three Legged Stool of Happy Retirement



Integrated Lifecourse Systems

Western models that focus on “Autonomy” supported by portable income have tended to remove family support from the equation.



There is little or no incentive for Communities or Governments to offer more than minimal support services when there is no family to advocate for the aged.

Elder

Community

Government

RECOGNIZING FAMILY OBLIGATION ENCOURAGES SUCCESSFUL AGING



- Aging successfully depends upon the presence of family support systems (real or fictive).
- These systems need to be at hand and offer ongoing contact and interactions.
- Aging successfully demands sacrifice, planning, commitment and patience on both sides of the aging contract.
- You have an absolute obligation to your family.

CONCLUSION



- While there is no one best answer for a region as diverse as Asia there are more promising alternatives than social security schemes and Provident plans which currently face insolvency in many nations.
- This paper builds on a growing body of research in this field and argues that by helping families support their elder all parties benefit, cost saving emerge and intergenerational support systems can be maintained.

Contact Information



My email: jmcnally@umich.edu

NACDA's website: www.icpsr.umich.edu

NACDA's email: NACDA@umich.edu

This presentation can be downloaded from James McNally's Facebook page or from the NACDA Program on Aging Facebook page.