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CUHK Establishes First WHO Centre for Sports Medicine and Health Promotion

We all know that regular exercise is the key to healthy and quality life but many people just do not know how to start.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) established the first World Health Organisation Collaborating Centre for Sports Medicine and Health Promotion to raise public awareness of the benefits of exercise and help them to assess their body strength and develop a suitable "keep-fit" programme for themselves.

Set up by CUHK's Department of Orthopaedics and Traumatology, Department of Community and Family Medicine and Department of Medicine, and housed in the Union Hospital, the Centre collaborates with the World Health Organisation to promote health and prevent diseases in the Asia Pacific Region through education and research in sports medicine. The Centre has a pool of experts to offer treatment of sports injuries, fitness assessment and exercise prescription for general public.

"People generally have a wrong impression that sports are for elite only. In fact, everyone of us can benefit from sports simply by doing moderate-intensity physical exercise two to three times a week," Centre Director and Chairman of Department of Orthopaedics & Traumatology, CUHK, Professor Chan Kai-ming said.

"Even elderly, obese people or those with chronic illness can benefit from physical activity under the prescription of professionals," Dr Anthony Lee of Union Hospital said.

Physical inactivity afflicted most Hong Kong people, especially children and elderly. Studies by Professor Sophie Leung of Department of Paediatrics, CUHK, showed that many children in Hong Kong are overweight, largely due to lack of physical exercise and unbalanced diet.

Programmed physical activities have positive effects on both skeletal growth and muscular performance, as revealed in a 3-year longitudinal study of a group of students of T-I College by the CUHK.

"Bone mass acquisition, muscular strength and power of those in the Physical Education group, who undergo six more sessions (35 minutes each) of physical activities each cycle are higher than those in the Arts group," Professor Chan said.

To tackle the world-wide trend of physical inactivity of children, the Centre will co-

organise an International Sports Medicine Congress on Sports and Children on 11-12 January, 1997. Over 500 experts from around the world will join. They will compile a consensus statement on "Sports and Children" and identify means to promote exercise and health for the younger generation in the Asia-Pacific region.

Professor Lee Shiu-hung of the Department of Community and Family Medicine, and Professor Jean Woo of Department of Medicine agreed that the promotion of exercise for health needed community participation and support. They hoped that elderly and people of all ages could benefit from professional advice by the staff of the Centre.

Professor Woo added that continuous physical activity prevented functional impairment and disabilities during ageing process, and prevention of osteoporosis related fractures.

Professor Chan also hoped the setting-up of the Centre would facilitate inter-institutional and multi-disciplinary research on sports science, sports injuries- epidemiology and advanced technology, molecular biology and soft tissue research, sport rehabilitation and isokinetic technology.

Equipped with a Sports Medicine Resource Centre, the Centre has developed a wide collection of related educational materials including pamphlets, textbook, video and exhibits to raise public awareness of the health benefits of exercise.

The Centre is also planning for a series of training courses in sports medicine to develop a pool of experts in the Asia-Pacific region to further the research and promotion work of sports medicine and health promotion. In addition, the Centre will also cooperate with Chinese tertiary institutions and extend its mission of work in China with collaborative education and research work.

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