

Due to population ageing and the new elderly policy framework “ageing in place”, increasing number of older adults are living in the community instead of being institutionalised in hospitals or nursing homes. Many of these older adults are looking after by informal caregivers, which means “the people---family, friends, neighbours--- who provide critical and ongoing personal, social, psychological and physical supports, assistances and care, without pay, for loved ones in need of support due to frailty, illness, degenerative disease, physical/ cognitive/mental/disability or end of life circumstances (Newman et. al. 2019: 1495). According to the 2021 Population Census, there were 164,000 informal caregivers in Hong Kong (HK01, 2022). A study conducted by the legislative council found that approximately, there were around 285,000 informal caregivers in 2013.

Building upon previous Carer Café study (Fung and Chan 2023), this study tries to find out informal caregivers’ third place in the community. The third place refers to a public place outside home (first place) and workplace (second place) where visitors can interact with others voluntarily or just being alone, such as café, bar or fast-food shop (Oldenburg 1999). This is important because knowing where informal caregivers frequently visit and what they did in these places can help social service providers plan more precise engagement strategies. An existing study found that carer café staff are facing engagement issues. Apart from informing their organization members to participate in the carer café, café staff have dedicated lots of effort and time to engage informal caregivers in the community. However, they still have difficulties reaching these informal caregivers, such as not interested in the café, do not knowing how to approach the caregivers or disseminate information ineffectively.

To solve this engagement issue, this study tries to find out the informal caregivers’ third places by delineating their daily routine. Specially, this study focuses on where informal caregivers frequently visit in the community and what did they frequently consume using survey approach to collect data. The findings can help social service providers understand where they can access more informal caregivers and what products or services they need. Being informed by this information, more precise engagement strategies are more likely to be planned.

This study is about advancing existing informal caregivers engagement strategies. The objective is: to explore how to use informal caregivers’ geographical mobility information and consumption pattern to plan engagement strategies and investigate the effectiveness of these strategies.