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A proactive child protection programme for mothers with psychological distress: A pilot project

Submission date
12/07/2022

Recruitment status
No longer recruiting

Registration date
02/08/2022

Overall study status
Completed

Last Edited
03/07/2025

Condition category
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[X] Results
[ ] Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims
Psychological distress is an emotional state associated with depression, anxiety and stress. The postpartum period is a vulnerable time for the onset or relapse of psychological distress in women due to new challenges, and physiological and psychological changes. Mothers with psychological distress or emotional problems tend to express behaviours that have a negative impact on their family relationships and children's development. While the needs of this vulnerable group are increasingly being recognised in Hong Kong, there is currently a lack of supportive programmes to assist them during the transition period of motherhood, improve maternal mental health, and facilitate child health and development. In this pilot project, we would like to provide a proactive child protection programme involving a confinement nanny (Pui Yuet) who cares for a new mother and the newborn using traditional Chinese confinement methods lasting one month, including diet, well-being, and other post-natal practices. The Pui Yuet acts as a child care provider and volunteers as a neighbourhood buddy for conducting supportive home visits and child care services to mothers with psychological distress in order to enhance their parenting competency, and reduce their parental stress, anxiety and depression.

The objectives of the project are to:
1. Provide an advanced training course for certified Pui Yuet and volunteers, and recruit trained Pui Yuet to act as child care providers and trained volunteers as neighbourhood buddies
2. Provide perinatal and child care support service, by trained Pui Yuet and volunteers, for families in poverty with 0-24-month-old babies for 3-6 months
3. Provide parenting coaching for mothers in need
4. Establish a supportive network for mothers
5. Evaluate the effects of the proactive child protection programme in terms of maternal, children, Pui Yuet and volunteer outcomes

Who can participate?
Certified Pui Yuet, volunteers and women with emotional problems/psychological distress who have 0-24 months babies (phase two only)

What does the study involve?
In phase one, an advanced training course will be delivered to 100 certified Pui Yuet and volunteers in 6 half-days via synchronous online sessions. In phase two, 50 mothers with emotional problems/psychological distress will be recruited to attend a 12- week neighbourhood buddies programme. During the programme, each mother will receive support from a trained Pui Yuet with volunteer participation for a period of 12 weeks with 10 hours each week in three home visits.

The quantitative outcomes of the mothers (parenting competency, parental stress, and anxiety and depression), trained Pui Yuet and volunteers (empathy) will be measured before and after the programme.

Individual semi-structured interviews will be conducted with mothers, Pui Yuet and volunteers to explore their experiences of and feelings towards the programme after its completion, with audio-recording.

Babies' growth and development will be monitored by reviewing the data on body weight and length. The attachment between babies and their mothers will be observed during the semi-structured interviews after the programme completion. The medical attendance of babies will also be monitored. The cost-effectiveness of the programme will be estimated with such information.

Recruitment, retention and drop-outs of the trained Pui Yuet and volunteers, as well as recruitment, compliance and drop-outs of the participating women, will also be monitored.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?
The potential benefits of participating in the study include improvements in parenting competency, parental stress, anxiety and postnatal depression among mothers with psychological distress; and enhanced empathy among Pui Yuet and volunteers. The interventions are not expected to cause any pain, discomfort, or harm to participants.

Where is the study run from?
Chinese University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?
April 2022 to June 2024

Who is funding the study?
Adrian and Jennifer Cheng Foundation Limited (Hong Kong)

Who is the main contact?
Prof Ka Ming Chow
kmchow@cuhk.edu.hk

Contact information

Type(s)
Principal investigator

Contact name
Prof Ka Ming Chow

Contact details
The Nethersole School of Nursing
6/F, Esther Lee Building
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Shatin
Hong Kong
Hong Kong
None available
+852 39434431
kmchow@cuhk.edu.hk

Additional identifiers

Study information

Scientific Title
A proactive child protection programme for mothers with psychological distress: A pilot project with outcome evaluation

Study objectives
The objectives of the project are to:
1. Provide an advanced training course for certified Pui Yuet and volunteers, and recruit trained Pui Yuet to act as child care providers and trained volunteers neighbourhoodood buddies
2. Provide perinatal and child care support service, by trained Pui Yuet and volunteers, for poverty families with 0-24 month babies for 3-6 months
3. Provide parenting coaching for mothers in need
4. Establish a supportive network for mothers living in the district of NTEC
5. Evaluate the effects of the proactive child protection programme in terms of maternal, children, Pui Yuet and volunteer outcomes

Ethics approval required
Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)
Approved 13/06/2022, Survey and Behavioural Research Ethics Committees of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Faculty Office, The Faculty of Social Science, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, Hong Kong SAR; +852 39439263; fssc02@cuhk.edu.hk), ref: SBRE-21-0601

Primary study design
Interventional

Study design
Non-randomized pilot pre-/post-test quasi-experimental study supplemented by semi-structured individual interviews

Study type(s)
Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied
Mothers with psychological distress

Interventions
This study will be conducted in two phases. In Phase one, an advanced training course will be delivered to 100 workers (certified Pui Yuet and volunteers) in 6 half-days via synchronous online sessions. The training contents include:
1. Managing mothers with emotional problems/psychological distress
2. Counselling technique
3. Identifying crisis conditions
4. Seeking for intervention
5. Getting known to all sort of available services to support family
6. Collaborating with a Comprehensive Child Development Surveillance (CCDS) team for medical and social support
7. Advance in child nutrition and child health (physical, psychological and well-being
8. How to establish daily routine for infants including sleep
9. Early childhood development and identification of special educational needs children
10. Community service on rehabilitation services for children
11. Parenting techniques and demonstration

In Phase two, 50 mothers with emotional problems/psychological distress and having 0-24 month babies will be recruited to attend a 12- week neighbourhood buddies programme. During the programme, each mother will receive support from the a trained Pui Yuet with volunteer participation for a period of 12 weeks with 10 hours each week in three home visits regarding the following aspects:
1. Medical service: Accompany for medical service including psychiatric follow up or CCDS assessment of both mothers and their babies
2. Parenting service: Parenting workshop and peer support group
3. Community service: Build up an informal neighborhood supporting network
4. Counselling service: Individual cases might need family therapist for intervention
5. Pui Yuet service: Perinatal nursery, emotional support, Chinese “po” soup and child care
6. Volunteer service: Pair up with Pui Yuet and visit regularly, hopefully can build up a friendship relationship with the family

Intervention Type
Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)
Parental competency measured using the Chinese version of the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (C-PSOC) at baseline and after the programme

Key secondary outcome(s)
1. Parental stress of the mothers measured using the Chinese version of Parental Stress Scale (C-PSS) at baseline and after the programme
2. Anxiety of the mothers measured using the Chinese version of State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (C-STAI) at baseline and after the programme
3. Depression of the mothers measured using the Chinese version of Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (C-EPDS) at baseline and after the programme
4. Empathy of the workers measured using the subscales of perspective taking and empathic concern in the Chinese version of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (C-IRI) before and after the advanced training programme
5. Mothers' and workers' experiences of and feelings towards the programme explored by semi-structured interviews after completion of the programme

6. Baby outcomes: Babies' growth and development will be monitored by reviewing the data of body weight and length. The attachment between babies and their mothers will be observed during the semi-structured interviews after the programme completion. Medical attendance of babies will also be monitored. Cost-effectiveness of the programme will be estimated with such information.
7. Feasibility outcomes: Recruitment, retention and drop-outs of the trained Pui Yuet and volunteers, as well as recruitment, compliance and drop-outs of the participating women will also be monitored

Completion date
30/06/2024

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria
1. Phase one: Certified Pui Yuet and volunteers
2. Phase two: Mothers with emotional problems/psychological distress and having 0-24 month babies

Participant type(s)
Mixed

Healthy volunteers allowed
No

Age group
Adult

Sex
Female

Key exclusion criteria
Does not meet inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment
19/06/2022

Date of final enrolment
31/12/2023

Locations

Countries of recruitment
Hong Kong

Study participating centre
Prince of Wales Hospital
Comprehensive Child Development Surveillance Team of the New Territories East cluster

Shatin
Hong Kong
None available

Study participating centre
Healthy Mothers-to be Association Ltd
Unit B01
20/F
Galaxy Factory Building
25-27 Luk Hop Street
San Po Kong
Hong Kong
None available

Study participating centre
Hong Kong Doulos Ministry Centre
Rm 11
4/F
Hong Kong Industrial Centre Block A
Hong Kong Industrial Center
489-491 Castle Peak Road
Lai Chi Kok
Hong Kong
None available

Sponsor information

Organisation
Chinese University of Hong Kong

ROR
https://ror.org/00t33hh48

Funder(s)

Funder type
Charity

Funder Name
Adrian and Jennifer Cheng Foundation Limited

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the study will be anonymised and available upon reasonable request from the Chief Investigator Prof Ka Ming Chow (kmchow@cuhk.edu.hk) on a case-by-case basis after publication. Anonymised participant-level data will be available 1 year following completion of the study and for up to 5 years.

IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Basic results			03/07/2025	No	No