
Strengthening Community Hubs and Community-Centred Approaches to Promote Social Capital and Healthy Ageing

Faculty:

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Project Description:

The PhD will contribute to a programme of research examining how community-centred and place-based strategies can strengthen resilience, social capital, and healthy ageing in Singapore through two interrelated projects.

The first project investigates community needs, assets, and capacity at the precinct level. In collaboration with SingHealth, the research will assess the health, social, and service access needs of older adults across two contrasting precincts. Using a systems-informed ecosystem approach, the study will map resident and provider landscapes, community assets, and stakeholder networks—identifying formal services, informal supports, partnership structures, community-centred initiatives, and coordination gaps. This will generate actionable evidence on how community assets and relationships can be aligned and activated to increase older adults' and neighbourhood resilience to age well.

Building on this foundation, the second project examines how co-located, integrated community hubs—such as Our Tampines Hub and One Punggol—can operationalise community-centred principles at scale. The research will analyse how these hubs can be planned, designed, and governed to enhance social capital and community capacity, optimise inter-agency collaboration and shared resources, and improve equitable access, particularly for older adults. Beyond individual sites, the study will identify transferable success factors and hub typologies to inform national scaling strategies.

Together, the projects will generate integrated, practice-oriented frameworks to: (1) prioritise and plan community-centred strategies for healthy ageing; (2) design and operate these integrated community hubs aligned with these principles; and (3) develop and validate measurement tools for community capacity and social capital.

The PhD will involve close collaboration with healthcare providers, planners, policymakers, and community stakeholders to ensure translational impact. Applicants with backgrounds in public health, health services research, social policy, urban planning, sociology, geography, health economics, or related interdisciplinary fields are encouraged to apply.