THE SIXTH PROFESSOR CHAR-NIE CHEN DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

香港中文大學
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香港中文大學醫學院
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Keynote Speaker & 2026 Distinguished Visiting Professor of Professor Chen Char-Nie Research and Education Fund

Professor Gill Livingston

Professor of Psychiatry of Older People
Division of Psychiatry
University College London
United Kingdom

DREAMS START for sleep disturbance in people with dementia

Date: 22 November 2026 (Sunday)
Time: 18:30 - 19:45 (Inclusive of Q&A Session)
Venue: Orchid Room, Lower Level II, Kowloon Shangri-la

CME / CPD in application

Registration

Enquiries

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The Chinese University of Hong Kong
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DREAMS START for sleep disturbance in people with dementia

Abstract:

Sleep disturbance is common and distressing for people with dementia. People are often treated with medication despite its known risks as health professionals do not have other strategies. We developed and delivered DREAMS-START (Dementia RElAted Manual for Sleep; STrAtegies for RelaTives), a non-pharmacological intervention. The six-session, manualised intervention is delivered by supervised, non-clinical graduates. Its tailored strategies included routine, comfort, increasing light exposure, relaxation, and activity.

We conducted a two-arm, multi-centre, parallel arms, superiority RCT randomised (1:1) to DREAMS-START or usual treatment with masked outcome assessment, recruiting 377 dyads of people with dementia and sleep disturbance living at home, and their family caregivers. The primary outcome was the Sleep Disorders Inventory (SDI) score at 8 months. We collected outcomes at 4 months, and 8 months. Analyses were intention to treat.

Participants with dementias' mean age was 79.4 years, 206 (54.6%) were women. Mean SDI score at 8 months was lower in the intervention arm versus usual treatment. At 8 months, the intervention group carer sleep and carer anxiety were significantly lower than usual treatment. It was cost-effective and cost-saving. We followed up participants 2 years later and found continuing effectiveness for sleep in the intervention group compared to the controls.

To our knowledge, this is the first fully powered RCT of a multicomponent non-pharmacological intervention to improve sleep in people living at home with dementia and their caregivers. It has sustained effectiveness beyond delivery. DREAMS-START has potential to be delivered at scale in health services.

Biography:

Professor Livingston is an internationally recognised clinical academic in dementia prevention, intervention and care. She is Professor of Psychiatry of Older People and Director of Research in the Division of Psychiatry at University College London, and a consultant psychiatrist with North London NHS Foundation Trust. Her work integrates epidemiological, psychosocial and interdisciplinary approaches, with particular attention to underserved and minority ethnic communities.

She leads the Lancet Standing Commission on Dementia Prevention, Intervention and Care, which published landmark reports in 2017, 2020 and 2024. Her research has appeared in leading general medical and specialist journals, including The Lancet, JAMA, the BMJ, Alzheimer's & Dementia, the American Journal of Psychiatry and Sleep. Her Scopus h-index is 90.

Her research has delivered scalable psychosocial interventions. The START programme for family carers demonstrated sustained clinical and cost-effectiveness, with benefits maintained over six years, and has been recommended by NICE and implemented internationally. She also co-developed and evaluated DREAMS START for sleep disturbance in dementia.

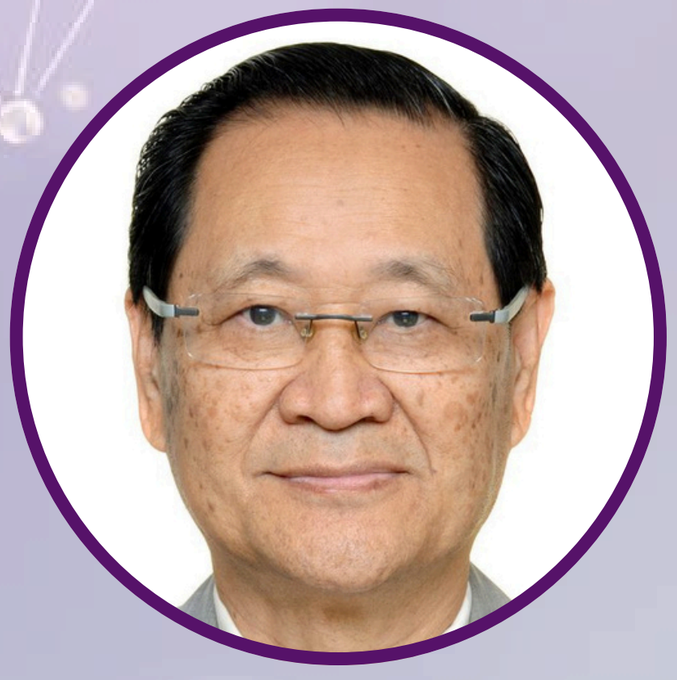
Her distinctions include an NIHR Senior Investigator Award (now Emeritus), recognition in the Altmetric Top 100 for the 2017 Lancet Commission report, and the Royal College of Psychiatrists Academic Woman in Psychiatry Award in 2017.

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Professor Char-Nie CHEN

OBE, JP, MB, MSc, FHKAM(Psychiatry), FHKCPsych (Hon.) FHKCPsych, FRCPsych, FRANZCP, DPM

Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

As the Foundation Chairman and Professor of Psychiatry, Professor Char-Nie CHEN built up the Department of Psychiatry in CUHK from scratch in 1981. He laid down the solid foundation for undergraduate teaching in behavioural science and bio-psycho-social medicine and believed that psychiatry should be taught as a universal subject similar to other medical disciplines for undergraduate medical students and non-psychiatrists. He was instrumental in developing a postgraduate training course in psychiatry in CUHK, which was later adopted by the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists as the Central Training Course in Hong Kong. He insisted on a training career in psychiatric subspecialty and was influential in building up child and adolescent psychiatry and old age psychiatry. In research development, he has built up the monumental research in psychiatric epidemiology with the landmark Shatin Psychiatric Epidemiology Survey and a new cross-disciplinary research in sleep medicine. In 1986-1994 he was also appointed by the University as the Foundation Head of the Shaw College, he again built up the new college from scratch with the help of many university and college staff. After his retirement in 1998, he worked as a private specialist in psychiatry but continued to help promote addiction psychiatry and liaison psychiatry for HIV/AIDS patients. He was awarded O.B.E. in 1997. With his foresight, wisdom and passion, he has helped to transform psychiatric education for both undergraduate and postgraduate education and research landscape in Hong Kong.

Department has established a research and education fund and is honoured to name the fund (Professor Char-Nie Chen education and research fund) after Professor CHEN. The fund will be used in enhancing the education and research aspects of the Department. In particular, there will be an annual Char-Nie Chen Distinguished Lecture that will invite eminent psychiatrists and scientists around the world to come to Hong Kong to deliver the lecture. The 6th Professor Char-Nie Chen Distinguished Lecture on November 22, 2026 will be delivered by Professor Gill Livingston, Professor of Psychiatry of Older People, Division of Psychiatry, University College London, United Kingdom.

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