



## **Media Release**

### **Financial burdens and well-being of Singapore's older adults significantly impacted by COVID-19**

*SMU uncovers behaviour and attitudes of seniors in response to the COVID-19 environment in Singapore through the Singapore Life Panel ®.*

**Singapore, 30 July 2020 (Thursday)** - Worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has jolted the daily lives of many. Particularly during the circuit breaker period which took effect from 7 April, Singaporeans have had to adapt quickly to a new normal, with some doing better than others, most notably the older adults.

The [Centre for Research on Successful Aging \(ROSA\)](#), a research centre based in Singapore Management University (SMU) has undertaken a study to understand possible impacts on elderly Singaporeans, so that further assistance may be provided to them in the future.

Using collected data from the [Singapore Life Panel \(SLP\)](#), the study explored a wide array of topics to uncover the effects of COVID-19 and government responses on the attitudes, behaviour, and well-being of older adults in Singapore within the social, economic and mental health domains. Additionally, findings were contrasted between respondents of different socioeconomic and education levels, leading to a more robust discussion of policy implications for different vulnerable groups. Data was collected from a population representative monthly survey with a monthly response rate of about 7,500 respondents, tracking the lives of Singaporeans aged 55 to 75.

#### **Objectives of the study**

- 1) To evaluate the effectiveness of government interventions to-date
- 2) To uncover gaps in current policy measures
- 3) To recommend untouched avenues for executing future policies

**Professor [Paulin Straughan](#), Director, Centre for Research on Successful Aging** said "We embarked on this study to understand the factors that shape the well-being of the elderly who are not agile financially, nor technology savvy. With the findings, we hope that policies implemented can be better shaped to ensure older Singaporeans recover quickly and those who require more assistance are able to find the appropriate avenues for help. This is especially important for older adults who live alone or are from low socio-economic status (SES) households, as they experience declines more than those who stay with others or are from high SES households."

The study identified 3 core areas that could be further improved to enhance the well being of the elderly:

- 1) Financial assistance for those from low-socioeconomic status households
- 2) Mental health support for those who live alone and are socially isolated
- 3) Measures to plug technology gaps and help seniors adapt to digital transformation

At present, several government initiatives are in place to ease concerns about the needs of elderly Singaporeans, such as the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF)'s *National Care* Hotline, where individuals can seek guidance on mental health challenges they may be facing, and the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA)'s *Seniors Go Digital* Movement which promotes digital literacy.

In view of ROSA's study findings, representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Ministry of Manpower, Central Singapore CDC, and the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) have been invited to convene in August to assess COVID-19 policies implemented, look into the strengthening of current initiatives, and the development of possible new approaches to tackling issues experienced by the elderly population.

Please refer to **Annex** for summary findings.

For full findings and graphics, click [here](#).

### About [SMU Centre for Research on Successful Aging \(ROSA\)](#)

ROSA is a multidisciplinary research centre based in SMU. It was established with an MOE Tier 3 social sciences research grant, as well as the generous support of the Ngee Ann Kongsi foundation. Research at ROSA seeks to define and measure a holistic construct of well-being and to identify the factors that impact Singaporeans' well-being as they progress through the later phases of life. Through close collaboration with government and other partner agencies, ROSA also aims to translate research insights into policy innovations that advance the well-being of older adults holistically and promote successful ageing in Singapore. ROSA brings together a diverse team of leading international and local researchers in ageing and age-related issues from various disciplines. Through empirical evidence derived from a longitudinal methodological approach, the multidisciplinary and multi-institutional research team advances propositions that promote successful ageing in Singapore.

## About [Singapore Management University \(SMU\)](#)

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 10,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in interdisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU has an emphasis on generating rigorous, high-impact, and relevant multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU's faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities from USA, Europe, China and India, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. [www.smu.edu.sg](http://www.smu.edu.sg)

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