

PRESS RELEASE

ASHK's Study Reveals Significant Improvement in Hong Kong Mortality Experience

(HONG KONG, 3 September 2020)

The Actuarial Society of Hong Kong (ASHK) today published the **Hong Kong Assured Lives Mortality 2018 (HKA18)** study, its latest full report on the mortality of “assured lives”, i.e. people insured by 17 Hong Kong life insurance companies representing the majority of Hong Kong life insurers. The study, which covers the period 2010 – 2017, shows an increase in the expectation of life at birth from 78.6 to 82.5 years for males and from 83.6 to 86.8 for females compared with the prior study, which covered the period 1991 – 2000. The results are generally consistent with data from the Census and Statistics Department, Department of Health, HKSAR government statistics. ASHK believes the improvement is primarily driven by a better medical care environment and more health consciousness among the general public. *“The ASHK is proud to contribute to a better understanding of mortality trends in Hong Kong and hopes that this study will be useful to all those interested in this subject”, said Peter Duran, ASHK President.*

This study also analysed the changes in the causes of deaths compared with the prior study. For males under age 25, the proportion of deaths from accidents decreased greatly – from 38% to 18%. The corresponding decrease for females was from 38% to 14%. ASHK believes that the reduction in deaths from accident can be attributed to a safer environment in Hong Kong (e.g. reduction of mortality rates from traffic accident in the previous decade). On the other hand, there were significant increases in the proportion of deaths from cancer for these same groups, from 15% to 22% for males and from 15% to 24% for females.

For males aged 25 to 45 years, cardiovascular diseases account for a larger share of deaths compared with the prior study, the proportion having increased from 8% to 12%. *“We know that for people in early adulthood a richer diet leads to an increase in cardiovascular diseases, particularly for males. Being in this age group myself, I am reminded to do more physical activities for a healthy lifestyle and to lower the risk of cardiovascular diseases”* said Mr. Simon Lam, Chairperson of the ASHK's Experience Study Committee, which oversaw the mortality study.

For age groups over 45 years old, the study shows a significant increase in the proportion of deaths from diseases of the respiratory system (from 9% in HKA01 to 16% in HKA18 for male and from 8% to 13% for female). This is consistent with recent observations that elderly people are more likely to die from COVID 19. Besides, our study shows that the mortality rate for smokers is higher than non-smokers by around 69%. Thus, avoiding smoking habit is one of the keys towards longer lives. *“The next step for the ASHK is to investigate the*



incidence rates for critical illness. Critical illness coverage is becoming more and more popular these days”, said Mr. Lam.

These data could also serve as a basis for the study of demographic trends among the general public like mortality improvement, the impact of smoking on mortality by gender, and causes of death for different age groups.

Full details of the study protocol and related materials are available at <https://www.actuaries.org.hk/publications.php?id=17>. This report is free for public access.

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About the Actuarial Society of Hong Kong

The Hong Kong actuarial profession body was formed in 1968 as the Actuarial Association of Hong Kong and, 26 years later, its successor, the Actuarial Society of Hong Kong (ASHK) was duly incorporated in January 1994. The ASHK is a full member of the International Actuarial Association (IAA), which has 73 full member organisations and 28 associate member organisations around the world. The ASHK mission is "Representing, developing and inspiring the actuarial profession in Hong Kong to serve the public interest". As of August 2020, the membership of the ASHK is over 1,325 with 1,025 fully qualified Fellows. It is one of the largest such actuarial professional bodies in Asia. The ASHK is governed by an elected Council with a President, an Immediate Past President, a Vice President and 10 Council Members. The ASHK sets Professional Standards and Actuarial Guidance Notes for the actuarial profession in Hong Kong.