# A District Scan of Age-Friendliness: A Local District in Hong Kong as An Example

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30 Oct 2014

# Age-Friendly Cities (AFC)

* The World Health Organization (WHO) initiated The WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities (AFC) project to determine the core elements of age-friendly cities that support active aging

* With the participation of 33 cities in 22 countries, the *Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide* summarized the core features as identified by focus groups

* A 85-item *Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities* was also developed

The key question is:

**Where does my community stand in terms of age-friendliness?**

# Assessment Tool

* Qualitative research methods are useful to identify needs and improvement areas

* Quantitative research methods are useful to

  * to assess the level of age-friendliness of cities and its trend over time

  * to evaluate any programs that promote age-friendliness

# Universal Instrument

* Based on a common set of criteria
* Facilitate comparison
    * Across time
    * Across communities/ neighborhoods
* Up-to-date, there is no universal instrument to evaluate the age-friendliness of a community

# Aim

* To explore the feasibility of using an universal instrument to assess the level of age-friendliness in a community

# Objectives

* To develop a district scan based on a local adaptation of the AFC checklists developed by WHO

* To demonstrate the application of a district scan of age-friendliness and its implications

* To examine age group and geographic areas variations in age-friendliness

# The Settings

**Shatin District**

Covers the following area:

- Sha Tin
- Ma On Shan
- Tai Wai
- Fo Tan
- Siu Lek Yuen
- Ma Liu Shui

# Study Design

* Quantitative approach
* Cross-sectional study
* Convenience sample

# The Sample

* Convenience sample of >500 respondents

* Residents of Shatin District aged ≥35 years

* To support sub-group analyses, over-sampled

    * Residents living in Shatin town center and Ma On Shan new town

    * Older people

* Informed consents were sought

# Data Collection

* When: February to September 2011

* Where: Parks, housing estates, and public areas in Shatin

* How: (1) face-to-face interview conducted by trained research assistants (RA); (2) for literate subjects, self-administered questionnaires with assistance from trained RA

# The Instrument

* Structured questionnaire
  * Developed according to the WHO AFC checklists
* 85 aspects under 8 domains
* Responses based on a 6-point Likert scale
  * 1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree
  * Higher scores indicating greater age-friendliness

# 8 Domains/ 85 Aspects

| Domains | # aspects |
|---|---|
| Outdoor spaces and buildings | 12 |
| Transportation | 14+3 |
| Housing | 7 |
| Social Participation | 9 |
| Respect and social inclusion | 9 |
| Civic participation and employment | 8 |
| Communication and information | 11 |
| Community and health services | 12 |

# Statistical Analysis

* The domain scores were estimated by the average of the scores of the aspects under the corresponding domains
  * Range: 1 to 6 ($\uparrow$ scores, $\uparrow$ age-friendliness)
* Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the domain scores
* ANOVA was used to examine difference by age, gender and sub-area
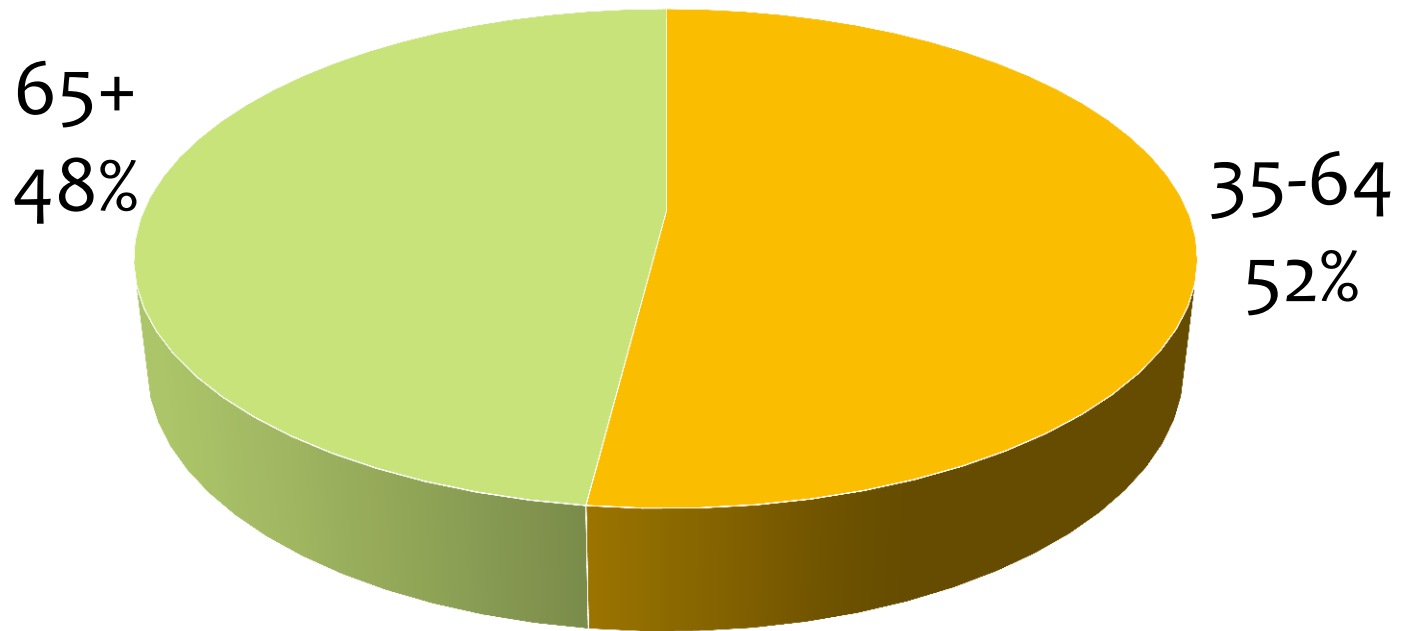* $\alpha=0.05/8=0.006$

# Results

* 528 completed questionnaires
  * 80% from face-to-face interviews
  * 20% from self-administered

# Respondents' Characteristics: Gender
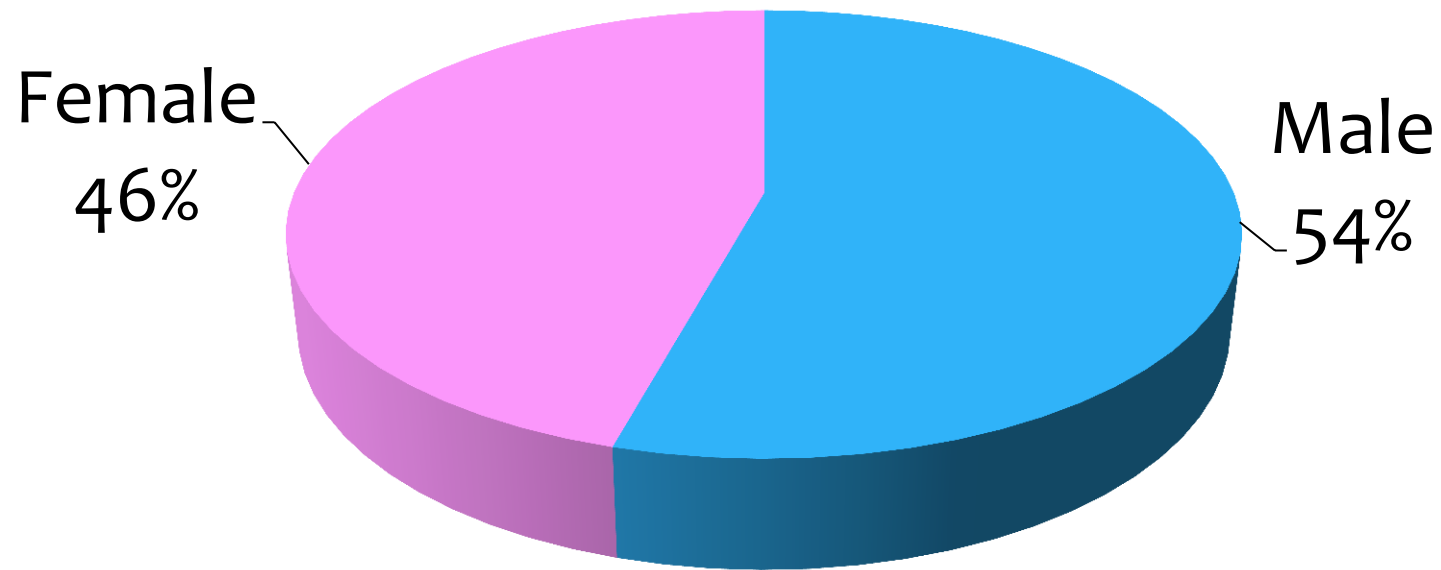
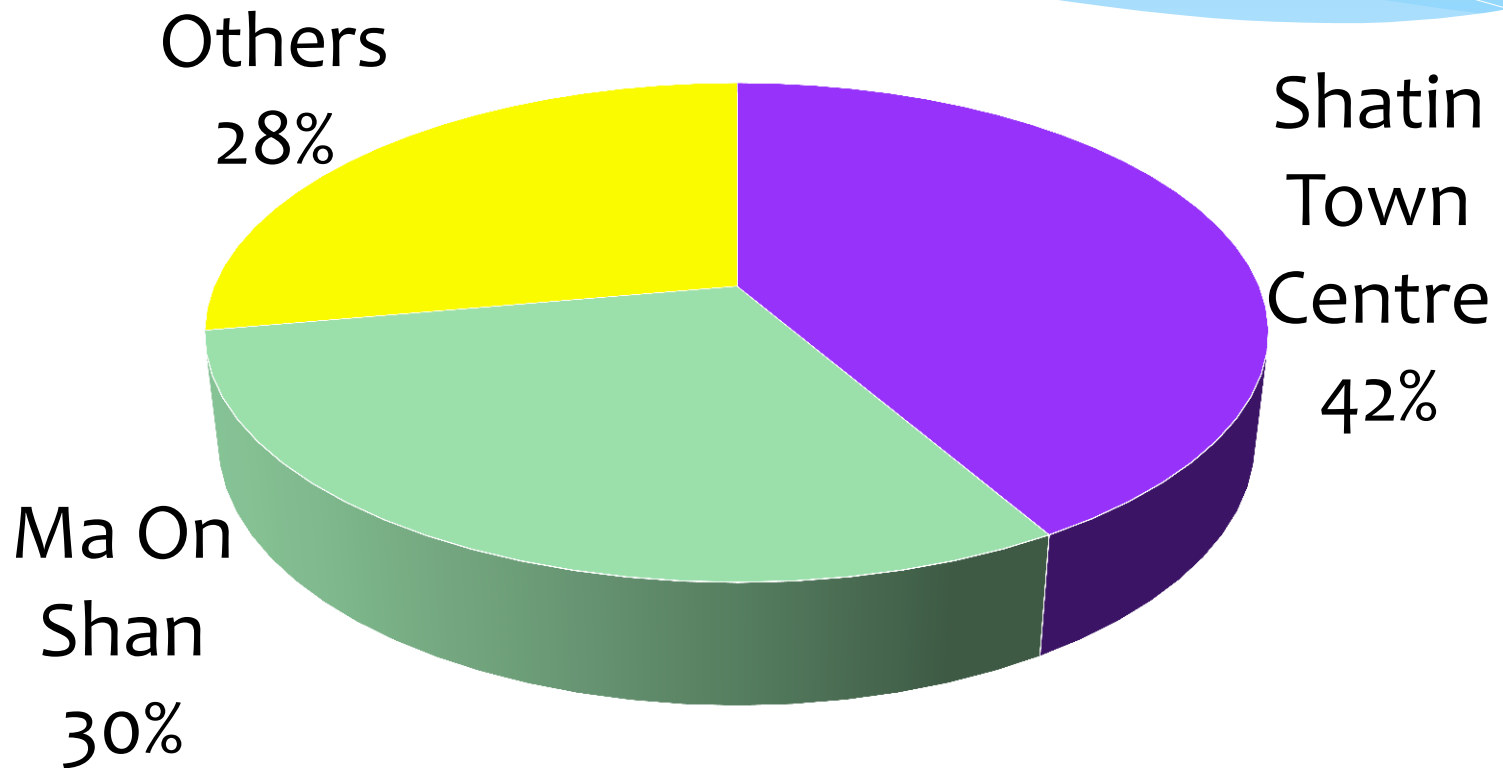# Respondents' Characteristics: Age Group



65+
48%

35-64
52%

# Respondents' Characteristics: Sub-Area



Others 28%

Shatin Town Centre 42%

Ma On Shan 30%

# Level of Age-Friendliness

| Domains | Score (raw) | Score (weighted) |
|---|---|---|
| Outdoor spaces & buildings | 4.19 | 4.11 |
| Transportation | 4.11 | 4.05 |
| Housing | 4.02 | 3.96 |
| Social Participation | 4.20 | 4.15 |
| Respect & social inclu... | 3.65 | 3.69 |
| Civic participation & employment | 2.95 | 3.02 |
| Communication & information | 3.70 | 3.71 |
| Community & health services | 3.83 | 3.75 |

Most age-friendly domain

Least age-friendly domain

# Most Age-friendly Aspects

Do you agree…

1. All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections [4.88; Transportation]

2. Traffic flow is well-regulated [4.63; Transportation]

3. Roads are well-maintained, with good lighting [4.63; Transportation]

Somewhat agree

Agree

# **Least Age-friendly Aspects**

Do you agree…

1. There are sufficient and accessible burial sites (including columbarium) [2.10; Community & health services]

2. Schools provide opportunities to learn about aging and older people and involve older people in school activities [2.53; Respect & social inclusion]

3. A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work are promoted[2.61; Civic participation & employment]
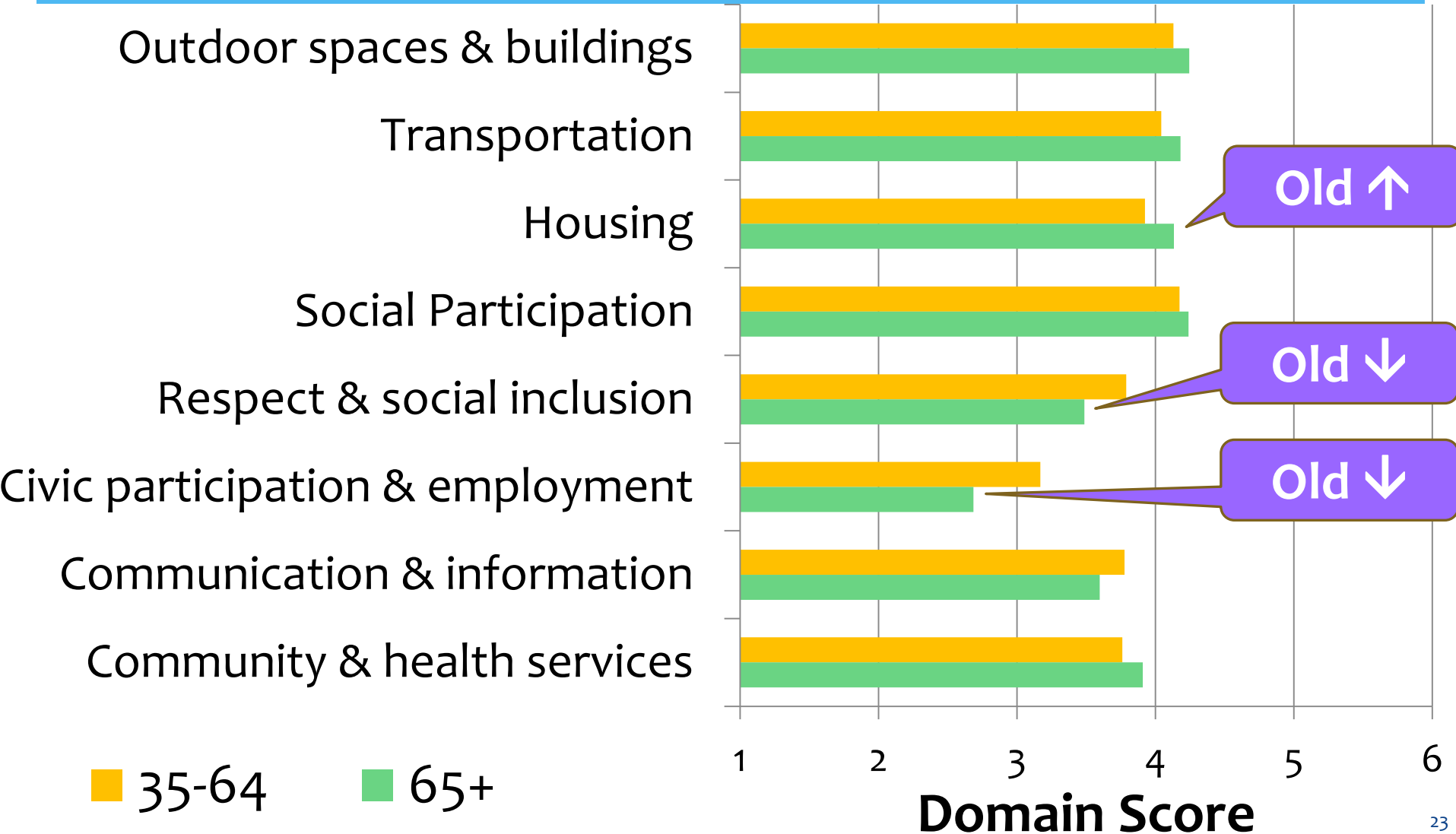
Somewhat disagree

Disagree

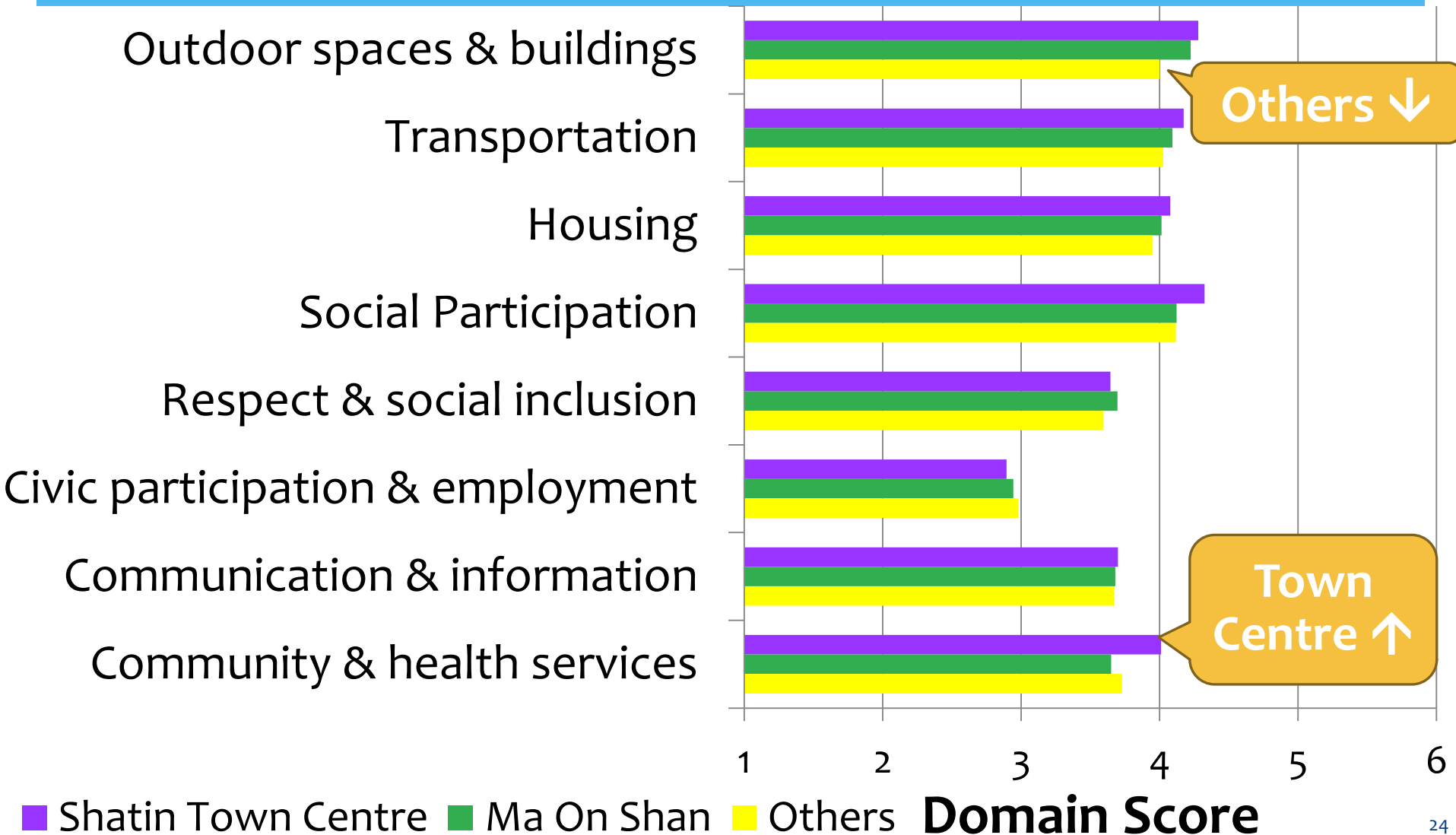# Level of Age-Friendliness by Gender
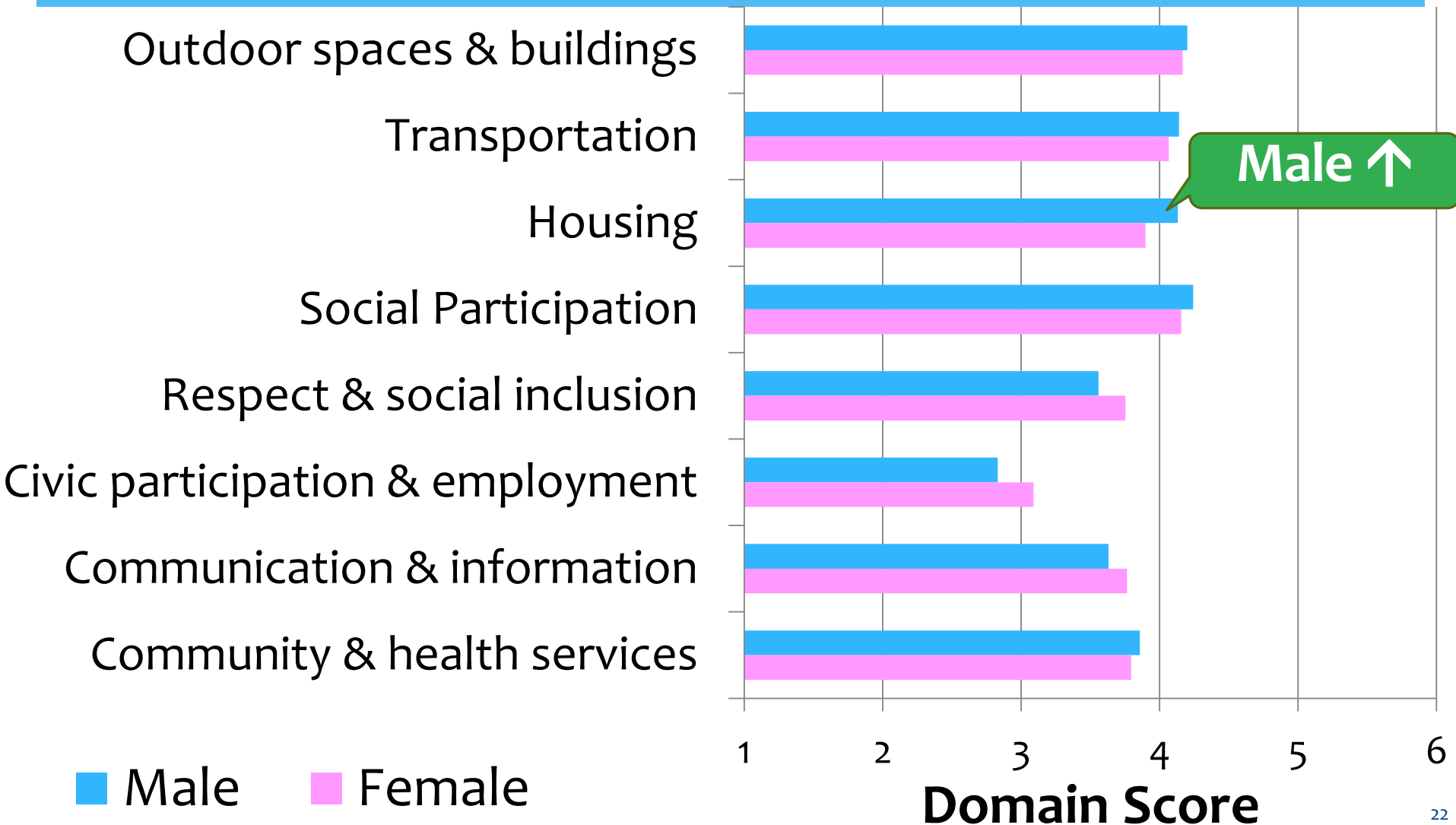
Level of Age-Friendliness by Sub-Area

# Predictor of Age-Friendliness Controlled for Other Factors

| Domains | Age | Gender | Area |
|---|---|---|---|
| Outdoor spaces & buildings | | | **Others ↓** |
| Transportation | | | |
| Housing | | | |
| Social Participation | | | |
| Respect & social inclusion | **Old ↓** | | |
| Civic participation & employment | **Old ↓** | | |
| Communication & information | | | |
| Community & health services | | | **Town Centre↑** |

# Discussions

* The district scan of age-friendliness could identify the most and the least age-friendly domains/ aspects

* We put more emphasis on the rankings/ comparisons

* Some considerations:

    * Can we use a shorter questionnaire (<85 aspects)?

    * Would the responses affected by cultural factors?

# Limitations

* The use of non-random sample may be subject to selection bias

* As with other self-reported measures, it may be subject to response bias

# Way Forward

* To repeat the study in a different local district for comparisons across district

* To repeat the study in the same district for comparisons across time

* To repeat the study in a different city for comparisons across cities
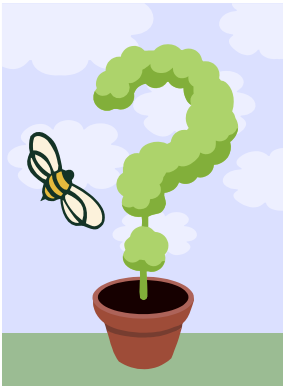
# Acknowledgement

* This study is part of the project entitled "CADENZA: A Jockey Club Initiative for Seniors" funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust

# More Details about The Study

* Chau PH, Wong M, Woo J. Living environment. In: Woo J, editor. *Aging in Hong Kong: A Comparative Perspective*. New York: Springer, 2012.

# Questions & Comments are Welcome!

# Outdoor Spaces and Building

1. Public areas are clean and pleasant.
2. Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well-maintained and safe.
3. Pavements are well-maintained and non-slip, with covered drains.
4. Pavements are wide enough, free of obstructions and have dropped curbs to road level for wheelchairs to pass through.
5. Pedestrian crossings are sufficient in number and safe for people with different levels of disability, with visual and audio cues and adequate crossing time.
6. Drivers give way to pedestrians at intersections and pedestrian crossings.
7. Cycle paths are separate from pavements.
8. Outdoor safety is promoted by good street lighting and police patrols.
9. Commercial services (e.g. shopping mall, supermarket and bank) are situated together and are accessible.
10. Special customer service arrangements are provided, such as service counters for older people.
11. Buildings are well-signed outside and inside, with sufficient seating, accessible elevators, ramps, railings and stairs, and non-slip floors.
12. Public toilets outdoors and indoors are accessible, sufficient in number, clean and well-maintained.

# Transportation

1. Traffic flow is well-regulated.
2. All city areas and services are accessible by public transport, with good connections.
3. Public transportation costs are affordable and clearly displayed. The costs are consistent under bad weather, peak hours and holidays.
4. Public transportation is reliable and frequent, including at night and on weekends and holidays.
5. Complete information is provided to users about routes and schedules, and list out the frequent of public transportation services for people with disabilities.
6. Vehicles are clean, well-maintained, accessible, not overcrowded and have priority seating. Passengers give the priority seats to the people in need.
7. Specialized transportation is available for disabled people.
8. Transport stops and stations are conveniently located, accessible, safe, clean, well-lit and well-marked, with adequate seating and shelter.

# Transportation (cont'd)

9. Drivers stop at designated stops and beside the curb to facilitate boarding and wait for passengers to be seated before driving off.
10. Alternative transport service is available where public transportation is too limited.
11. Taxis can accommodate wheelchair and walking aids, are affordable, and drivers are courteous and helpful.
12. Roads are well-maintained, with good lighting.
13. Parking and drop-off areas are safe, sufficient in number and conveniently located.
14. Priority parking and drop-off spots for people with special needs are available.
15. (For drivers only) Roadways are free of obstructions that block drivers' vision.
16. (For drivers only) Traffic signs and intersections are well-placed and drivers can spot the location easily.
17. (For drivers only) Driver education and refresher courses are promoted for all drivers.

# Housing

1. Sufficient, affordable housing is available in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community.
2. Sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support services are available.
3. Housing is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter under all weather conditions.
4. Interior spaces and level surfaces allow freedom of movement in all rooms and passageways.
5. Home modification options and supplies are available and affordable, and providers understand the needs of older people.
6. Rental housing is clean, well-maintained and safe.
7. Sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people, with appropriate services, is provided locally.

# Social Participation

1. Venues for events and activities are conveniently located, easily reached by public transport and accessible.
2. Venues for events and activities are well-signed and well-lit, with sufficient seating and toilets.
3. Events are held at times convenient for older people.
4. Activities and events can be attended alone or with a companion.
5. Activities and attractions are affordable, with no hidden or additional participation costs.
6. Good information about activities and events is provided, including details about accessibility of facilities and transportation options.
7. A wide variety of activities is offered to appeal to a diverse population of older people.
8. Gatherings including older people are held in various local community spots, such as recreation centers, schools, libraries, community centers and parks.
9. People at risk of social isolation are supported by consistent outreach services.

# Respect and Social Inclusion

1. Older people are regularly consulted by different services on how to serve them better.
2. Different services and products to suit varying needs and preferences are provided.
3. Service staffs are courteous and helpful.
4. Community-wide activities attract all generations by accommodating age-specific needs and preferences.
5. Older people are included in community activities for "families".
6. Older people who are less well-off have good access to different services.
7. Schools provide opportunities to learn about ageing and older people, and involve older people in school activities.
8. The community recognizes the present and past contributions of older people.
9. Older people are visible in the media, and are depicted positively and without stereotyping.

# Civic Participation and Employment

1. A range of flexible options for older volunteers is available, with training, recognition, guidance and compensation for personal costs.
2. The qualities of older employees are well promoted.
3. A range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities for older people to work is promoted.
4. Age discrimination is forbidden in the hiring, retention, promotion and training of employees.
5. Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people.
6. Self-employment options for older people are promoted and supported.
7. Training is provided for older workers to understand different post-retirement options.
8. Encourage and facilitate older people in decision making for different organizations.

# Communication and Information

1. A basic, effective communication system reaches people of all ages.
2. Regular and widespread distribution of information is assured and a coordinated centralized access is provided.
3. Regular information and broadcasts of interest to older people are offered.
4. Oral communication accessible to older people is promoted.
5. People at risk of social isolation get relevant information from trusted individuals.
6. Different services provide convenient and person-to person service on request.
7. Print and spoken communication uses simple, familiar words in short, straight-forward sentences.
8. Printed information has large lettering and the main ideas are shown by clear headings and bold-face type. It includes official forms, television captions and text on visual displays
9. Electronic equipment, such as mobile phones, radios, televisions, and bank and ticket machines, has large buttons and big lettering.
10. Telephone answering services give instructions slowly and clearly and tell callers how to repeat the message at any time.
11. There is wide public access to computers and the Internet, at no or minimal charge, in public places such as government offices, community centers and libraries.

# Community and Health Services

1. An adequate range of health and community support services is offered.
2. Health and social services are conveniently located and accessible by all means of transport, and can be accessed by people with different levels of disability.
3. Health and community service facilities are safety constructed.
4. Clear and accessible information is provided about health and social services for older people.
5. Home care services, including health and personal care and housekeeping, are available.
6. Residential care facilities and designated older people's housing are located close to services and the rest of the community.
7. Different services are coordinated and administratively simple.
8. All staffs are respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.
9. People will not be deprived of health and community support services due to economic barriers.
10. Voluntary services by people of all ages are encouraged and supported.
11. Community emergency planning (e.g. escape from fire) takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people.
12. There are sufficient and accessible burial sites (including columbarium).