

In this first newsletter of 2021, the ROSA team would like to wish you a Happy New Year! As we prepare to usher in the Chinese New Year this month, we hope that you and your loved ones are safe and enjoy the festive period together. In this issue, we provide an update on developments in the pipeline at ROSA and present key findings that were shared in our December Research Brief series.

Updates and Notices

There will be some exciting changes to our panel and survey platform taking place this year, as well as several events for you to look out for.

Panel Refresh

- The Singapore Life Panel® will expand to include a younger cohort of respondents aged 50 to 55 by July 2021. The information from this age group will enable researchers to make comparisons between the pre-retirement group and older cohorts, and gain additional insights into well-being and preparedness for retirement. It is crucial to capture these differences as Singapore's rapid economic and technological development imply that different cohorts are faced with different challenges and opportunities.

Shift to the new survey platform

- Over the years, we have received feedback from respondents about aspects of the survey platform that were not user-friendly. We would also like to add more functionality to our surveys to make them more interactive and interesting for our respondents. In light of this, the ROSA team has redesigned the survey platform to address these considerations and we are pleased to share that a new survey platform will be ready by April 2021. To ensure that the transition is smooth, your login ID will remain the same. We will provide a simple guide on accessing the new platform in our April invitation letter, so do look out for that!

Meetup session with SLP members

- The ROSA team intends to organise meetup sessions in the first half of the year with the SLP members to show our appreciation for your contributions and to seek ideas and views on ageing topics. ROSA researchers and staff will be present to interact with our valued SLP members. More details on these sessions will be shared in the coming months, but for those interested in participating, you may register your interest by contacting us at rosa@smu.edu.sg.



ROSA Assistant Manager, Qingqing (left) and her mother

We also take the opportunity to introduce another member of our team who will be planning the meetup sessions. In her undergraduate days, Ms Lu Qingqing may have been a familiar voice as she assisted SLP members through the phone completion of the monthly survey. Her interest in ageing issues developed from there and she worked as a Research Assistant at the Centre for Research on the Economics of Ageing (CREA). With the transition to ROSA, Qingqing now works as an Assistant Manager, focusing on administrative support and the daily operations of the SLP. Working with the SLP has helped her better understand some of the issues that the elderly face, thus helping her prepare for her parents' retirement. Outside of work, she enjoys going swimming and hiking.

Research Highlights

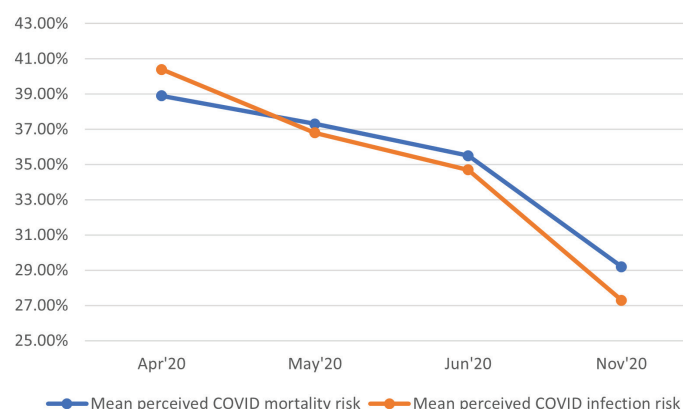


Figure 1. Perceived Mortality and Infection Risk from April 2020 to November 2020

Through 2020 we asked SLP members a wide range of questions relating to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Generally, respondents became less fearful of the risks associated with COVID-19 as the year progressed. However, those who used traditional forms of communication (i.e. phone calls, SMS and email) perceived the risks associated with COVID-19 to be higher as compared to those who used non-traditional forms (e.g. WhatsApp and social media platforms). The research team hypothesizes that such non-traditional forms of communication enabled respondents to be kept more informed on the latest COVID-19 developments.



Our findings also suggest that social networks which are large, tightly knit, and are perceived to be supportive are ideal for promoting better health satisfaction among seniors in our communities. Our researchers thus encourage frequent social contact with and between older adults through phone calls and visits (albeit while adhering to safe distancing restrictions!) and also that you introduce your friends and family to one another. Establishing neighbourly ties is also encouraged as it helps improve well-being and increases the availability of social support within one's immediate proximity.

Finally, it was also observed that during the 2020 General Election (GE2020), 40% of SLP members used social media as a source of campaign news. Social media was the third most used source, after TV (used by 75% of SLP members) and newspapers (used by 48% of SLP members). Such a large proportion of SLP members using social media for campaign news can be a good thing – studies have shown that social media use in such contexts can lead to increased feelings of political engagement which is associated with better well-being. However, it is important to be careful of misinformation on such platforms, as social media usage has also been observed to lead to political polarisation due to the spreading of falsehoods!

Dates of Surveys

- **February Survey: 1 - 22 February 2021**
- **March Survey: 1 - 24 March 2021**
- **April Survey: 1 - 25 April 2021**

Contact Us

If you have changed your address or telephone number, need any form of assistance in completing the survey, or have any questions or feedback, please contact us on our Centre Hotline at 6808 7910 (9am to 5pm, Mondays to Fridays) or at slp@smu.edu.sg. We are always happy to hear from you.