

## Psychological trauma and unsafe behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic

Yuan Cao

Y Cao<sup>1</sup>, JYM Siu<sup>2</sup>, DHK Shum<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China

<sup>2</sup>Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China

Contact: sally-yuan.cao@polyu.edu.hk

This study aims to explore the prevalence of psychological trauma arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, and level of engagement with preventative measures in the adult general population, about 1-year after the initial outbreak. Data was collected through a telephone survey in Hong Kong between December, 2020 to February, 2021, which comprised of the Revised Impact of Event Scale (IES-R), the Questionnaire of

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice Towards COVID-19 to measure routine preventions (e.g., wearing face mask), questions asking about willingness in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, participation in voluntary testing, and demographic questions. Results suggested that the prevalence of possible PTSD was 12.4%. Respondents reported being compliant with the routine preventative measures most of the time. Unemployment, a lack of income, and lower educational attainment were associated with higher psychological trauma. Female gender, older age, higher educational attainment, and being married were associated with higher compliance with routine preventative measures. Middle-aged or older adults or people who were married were consistently more engaged with following the health advice of preventative measures, including a higher vaccine acceptance. Younger adults appeared to be less engaged with the preventative measures.

### Key messages:

- The pandemic affects people's psychological health even after 1-year from the initial outbreak.
- Socio-demographic factors affect people's psychological and behavioral responses to the pandemic.