

THE FIFTH PROFESSOR CHAR-NIE CHEN DISTINGUISHED LECTURE



Keynote Speaker & 2025 Distinguished Visiting Professor of Professor Chen Char-Nie Research and Education Fund

Professor Ian Hickie AO MD

**Co-Director, Health and Policy, Brain and Mind Centre,
Professor of Psychiatry and NHMRC Senior Principal
Research Fellow, Central Clinical School, Faculty of
Medicine & Health
The University of Sydney**

Topic

**Implementing early intervention for
major mood disorders in the digital age:
the Australian Experience**

Date: 12 December 2025, Friday

Time: 18:30 - 20:00 (Inclusive of Q&A Session)

**Venue: Shanghai Room, 8/F, Cordis Hong Kong,
555 Shanghai Street, Mongkok,
Kowloon, Hong Kong**

**CME/ CPD In
Application**



Department of Psychiatry
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

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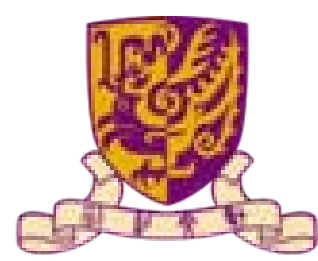
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Topic: Implementing early intervention for major mood disorders in the digital age: the Australian Experience

Abstract:

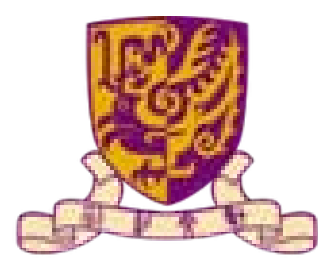
In Australia, we have seen a 20-year journey to develop specific early intervention services (under the brand 'Headspace') for young people in the early clinical stages of major anxiety, depressive and psychotic disorders. This has been successful in terms of providing a youth friendly 'front-door' to health care. However, it has been less successful in delivering major improvements in functional outcomes for those young people presenting to care. While many have argued the importance of introducing 'measurement-based' care into regular practice to drive a focus on improved outcomes, analog-style measurement system have not supported this way of working. By contrast, personal digital technologies can regularly collect both subjective and objective data from young people, include complementary information from families and carers, and be linked to smart health information systems. In Australia, we have demonstrated that, when these tools are co-designed with young people, and implemented in genuine ethically-based partnerships, they have the capacity for extensive uptake in relevant population groups. So, for the first time, we can track – in real time, in great detail and at scale – the course of emerging psychopathology in young people. The populations of great interest can include those seeking health care, as well as those who are "at risk" (due to exposure to known genetic, familial or environmental risk factors). The changing patterns of relevant symptoms, syndrome clusters, linked behaviours (e.g., alcohol or substance use; self-harm or suicidal behaviours) or physiological markers (e.g., 24-hour patterns of motor activity) can be directly followed. These patterns in "at-risk" or already unwell cohorts can then be compared with normal youth who are simply passing through this same developmental period. The data derived from such exercises present major opportunities to move beyond simplistic or diagnostically-siloed approaches that have characterized many previous clinically-oriented cohort or broad population studies. So, we can now move beyond our current broad descriptive approaches and delineate much clearer paths to the onset and course of major mood and psychotic syndromes. The more recent development of new AI systems will rapidly accelerate these efforts, assuming that such tools are trained on relevant data sources, and that issues related to potential risks are adequately addressed.

Biography:

Professor Hickie is a Professor of Psychiatry, Co-Director of Health and Policy, Brain and Mind Centre, University of Sydney and Scientific Advisor for Innowell Pty Ltd. He has led major public health and health services developments in Australia, particularly focusing on early intervention for young people with depression, suicidal thoughts and behaviours and complex mood disorders. He is active in the development through codesign, implementation and continuous evaluation of new health information and personal monitoring technologies to drive highly-personalized and measurement-based care.

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Professor Char-Nie CHEN

OBE, JP, MB, MSc, FHKAM(Psychiatry),
FHKCPsych (Hon.) FHKCPsych, FRCPPsych,
FRANZCP, DPM

**Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry
The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

As the Foundation Chairman and Professor of Psychiatry, Professor Char-Nie CHEN built up the Department of Psychiatry in CUHK from scratch in 1981. He laid down the solid foundation for undergraduate teaching in behavioural science and bio-psycho-social medicine and believed that psychiatry should be taught as a universal subject similar to other medical disciplines for undergraduate medical students and non-psychiatrists. He was instrumental in developing a postgraduate training course in psychiatry in CUHK, which was later adopted by the Hong Kong College of Psychiatrists as the Central Training Course in Hong Kong. He insisted on a training career in psychiatric subspecialty and was influential in building up child and adolescent psychiatry and old age psychiatry. In research development, he has built up the monumental research in psychiatric epidemiology with the landmark Shatin Psychiatric Epidemiology Survey and a new cross-disciplinary research in sleep medicine. In 1986-1994 he was also appointed by the University as the Foundation Head of the Shaw College, he again built up the new college from scratch with the help of many university and college staff. After his retirement in 1998, he worked as a private specialist in psychiatry but continued to help promote addiction psychiatry and liaison psychiatry for HIV/AIDS patients. He was awarded O.B.E. in 1997. With his foresight, wisdom and passion, he has helped to transform psychiatric education for both undergraduate and postgraduate education and research landscape in Hong Kong.

Department has established a research and education fund and is honoured to name the fund (Professor Char-Nie Chen education and research fund) after Professor CHEN. The fund will be used in enhancing the education and research aspects of the Department. In particular, there will be an annual Char-Nie Chen Distinguished Lecture that will invite eminent psychiatrists and scientists around the world to come to Hong Kong to deliver the lecture. The 4th Professor Char-Nie Chen Distinguished Lecture on December 1, 2024 will be delivered by Professor Nicola Lautenschlager, the Professor, Chair of Psychiatry of Old Age & Director of the Academic Unit for Psychiatry of Old Age (AUPOA) at Department of Psychiatry at University of Melbourne & Royal Melbourne Hospital Mental Health Services.

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