Psychosocial Factors Influencing the Practice of Preventive Behaviors Against the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Among Older Chinese in Hong Kong

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Objectives: This study explored psychosocial factors that influenced the practice of preventive behaviors against the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) among older adults. Method: A total of 354 older Chinese were telephone interviewed during the outbreak of SARS in Hong Kong. They were asked about their perceived health threats, efficacy beliefs, and the practice of SARS preventive behaviors. Results: Only 40.7% of the elderly participants practiced the recommended SARS preventive behaviors. Elderly participants who perceived greater personal vulnerability to the disease, who possessed greater self-efficacy, who had greater confidence in local health authorities, and who had lower educational attainment were more likely to adopt the suggested SARS preventive behaviors. Discussions: This study supported the conceptual framework that specified perceived health threats and efficacy beliefs as the two core dimensions of motivating factors in adopting SARS preventive behaviors.

Keywords: SARS and older adults; disease prevention; elderly preventive behaviors

The global epidemic of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) poses a serious health threat to the elderly population. A majority of