

IPS study on ageing: 8 in 10 elderly confident their needs will be taken care of

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Most elderly Singapore residents are positive about growing old with eight in 10 feeling confident that their needs would be taken care of as they age.

This was one of the key findings from a study on the perception and attitudes towards ageing and seniors.

Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) senior research fellow Mathew Mathews and National University of Singapore sociologist Paulin Straughan wrote in their report that the respondents' positive outlook on growing old is "quite remarkable, given the youth-oriented stance of our society".

The study, commissioned by the Council for Third Age (C3A), a government-funded group which promotes active ageing, covered more than 2,000 people between the ages of 50 and 74 years who lived in three-room Housing Board flats or larger housing units. It was carried out between October last year and January this year. The IPS released a report on the survey results on Wednesday.

The results showed that just over half the respondents rated their current (54 per cent) and future (52 per cent) financial adequacy as "good/very good/excellent". The rest gave a "poor/below average/average" rating.

Continuing to work after retirement is viewed positively by seniors, as a way to stay financially independent and have a sense of self-worth.

Many also see lifelong learning as a tool to help manage ageing, with nearly nine in 10 being motivated to continue learning in order to better manage their daily lives or to keep up with changes around them.

However, fewer than half the respondents intend to learn a new skill and only a third of them plan to take up a formal course. They cited barriers like time commitment stemming from work and household chores and also the lack of relevant courses.

There was much consensus among those polled about the meaning of successful ageing. Almost all of them agreed that it includes being happy, healthy, physically active, financially independent, and having close personal relationships. They were also optimistic about their experience of ageing so far.

The respondents also enjoyed a good quality of life, with about 70 per cent of them saying that they looked forward to each day and rarely or never felt that things were out of control in their lives.