**Topic:** Youth physical and social suicidal behaviour in Hong Kong – a series of mixed methods studies from a transdisciplinary perspective

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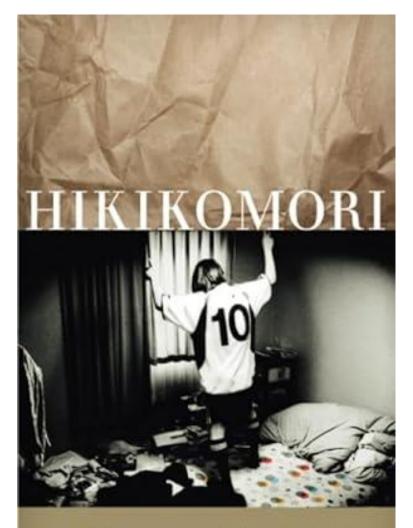
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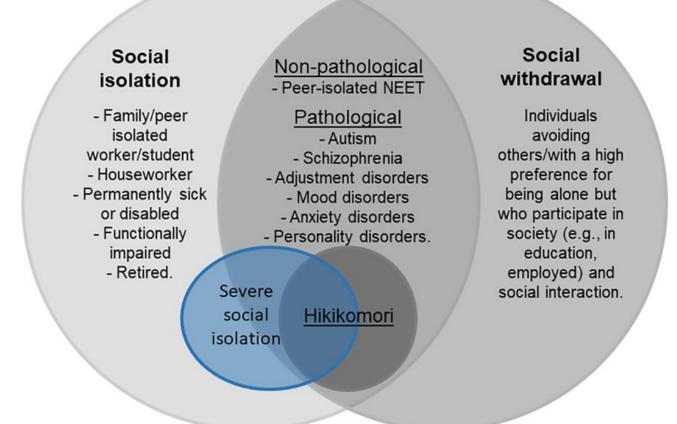
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Adolescence without End Saith Tamaki / Translated by Jeffrey Angles

This is the first English translation of a controversial Japanese best seller that made the public aware of the social problem of hikikomori, or "withdrawal"— a phenomenon estimated by the author to involve as many as one million Japanese adolescents and young adults who have withdrawn from society, retreating to their rooms for months or years and severing almost all ties to the outside world.

Saitō Tamaki's work of popular psychology provoked a national debate about the causes and extent of the condition.



**Fig 1. Hikikomori as a combination of social withdrawal and social isolation.** *Note*: Dimension does not represent real proportion. In each circle, expected membership categories are reported. Nevertheless, the distinction is not intended to be rigid. Severe social isolation, as operationalized in the present study, may include individuals belonging to different categories (in blue).

https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0291341.g001







# *Hikikomori*: Multidimensional understanding, assessment, and future international perspectives

Takahiro A. Kato, MD, PhD <sup>(D)</sup>,<sup>1</sup>\* Shigenobu Kanba, MD, PhD<sup>1</sup> and Alan R. Teo, MD, MS<sup>2,3,4</sup>

Table 1. Revised diagnostic criteria for *hikikomori* (cited and modified from Kato *et al.*<sup>33</sup>)

[Definition] Hikikomori is a form of pathological social withdrawal or social isolation whose essential feature is physical isolation in one's home.

The person must meet the following criteria:

- 1 Marked social isolation in one's home.
- 2 Duration of continuous social isolation for at least 6 months.
- 3 Significant functional impairment or distress associated with the social isolation.

Individuals who *occasionally* leave their home (2–3 days/week), *rarely* leave their home (1 day/week or less), and *rarely* leave a single room may be characterized as mild, moderate, and severe, respectively. Individuals who leave their home *frequently* (4 or more days/week), by definition, do not meet criteria for *hikikomori*. The estimated continuous duration of social withdrawal should be noted (e.g., 8 months). Individuals with a duration of continuous social withdrawal of at least 3 (but not 6) months should be noted as pre-*hikikomori*. The age at onset is typically during adolescence or early adulthood. However, onset after the third decade is not rare, and homemakers and elderly who meet the above criteria can also be considered.

# Evidence of pathological social withdrawal in non-Asian countries: a global health problem?

www.thelancet.com/psychiatry Vol 6 March 2019



Alison F W Wu, Jinnie Ooi, Paul W C Wong, Caroline Catmur, \*Jennifer Y F Lau Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, London SE5 8AF, UK (AFWU, CC, JYFL); Department of Philosophy, University of Warwick, Coventry, UK (JO); and Department of Social Work and Social Administration, University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China (PWCW)

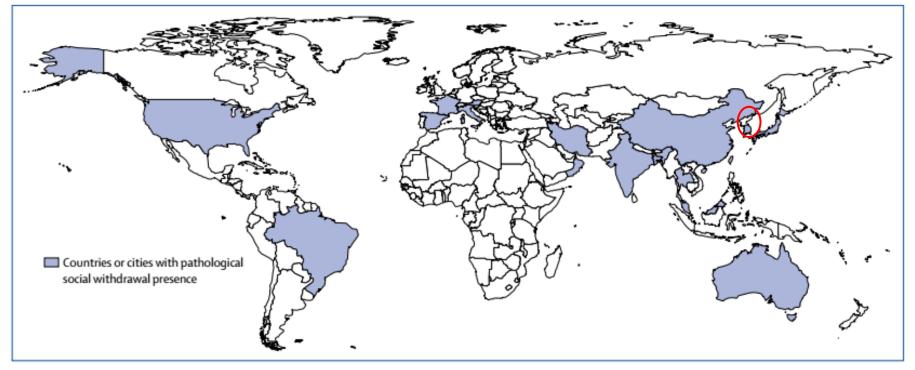


Figure: Presence of diagnosed cases of pathological social withdrawal in the world

The Sociological Review Volume 56, Issue 2, May 2008, Pages 309-325 © 2008 The Editorial Board of The Sociological Review, Article Reuse Guidelines https://doi-org.eproxy.lib.hku.hk/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2008.00790.x



Article

# The Japanese Hikikomori Phenomenon: Acute Social Withdrawal among Young People

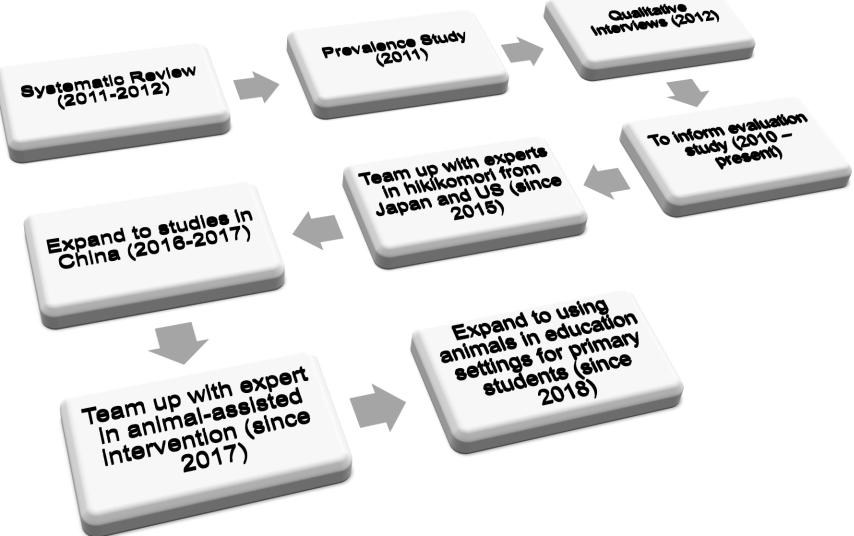
Andy Furlong

### Abstract

Although rare in the west, in Japan and in some other advanced countries on the Asian-Pacific rim, there is a popular perception that there has been a significant increase in the numbers of young people who withdraw socially for protracted periods of time (referred to by the Japanese term 'hikikomori'). This paper describes the hikikomori phenomenon in Japan, considers evidence relating to its prevalence and examines views about the causes. I argue that the tendency to think of hikikomori as a homogeneous group characterised by psychological malaise is misleading and that withdrawal and disengagement can also be linked to changing opportunity structures. The collapse of the primary labour market for young people and the growing prevalence of a precarious secondary sector has led to a situation in which traditional and deep-rooted norms are undermined and young people forced to find new ways of navigating transitions within a highly pressured and rigid system. Under these circumstances, acute withdrawal often represents an anomic response to a situation where tradition no longer provides adequate clues to appropriate behaviour rather than as a malaise reducible to individual psychologies.

# **Underpinning Research**

Our team in Hong Kong has conducted both **basic and applied studies sequentially** with **various research methodologies**:



Youth social withdrawal behavior (hikikomori): A systematic review of qualitative and quantitative studies



Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry 2015, Vol. 49(7) 595–609 DOI: 10.1177/0004867415581179

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Tim MH Li and Paul WC Wong

### Abstract

**Objective:** Acute and/or severe social withdrawal behavior among youth was seen as a culture-bound psychiatric syndrome in Japan, but more youth social withdrawal cases in different countries have been discovered recently. However, due to the lack of a formal definition and diagnostic tool for youth social withdrawal, cross-cultural observational and intervention studies are limited. We aimed to consolidate existing knowledge in order to understand youth social withdrawal from diverse perspectives and suggest different interventions for different trajectories of youth social withdrawal.

Method: This review examined the current available scientific information on youth social withdrawal in the academic databases: ProQuest, ScienceDirect, Web of Science and PubMed. We included quantitative and qualitative studies of socially withdrawn youths published in English and academic peer-reviewed journals.

**Results:** We synthesized the information into the following categories: (1) definitions of youth social withdrawal, (2) developmental theories, (3) factors associated with youth social withdrawal and (4) interventions for socially withdrawn youths. Accordingly, there are diverse and controversial definitions for youth social withdrawal. Studies of youth social withdrawal are based on models that lead to quite different conclusions. Researchers with an attachment perspective view youth social withdrawal as a negative phenomenon, whereas those who adopt Erikson's developmental theory view it more positively as a process of seeking self-knowledge. Different interventions for socially withdrawn youths have been developed, mainly in Japan, but evidence-based practice is almost non-existent.

**Conclusion:** We propose a theoretical framework that views youth social withdrawal as resulting from the interplay between psychological, social and behavioral factors. Future validation of the framework will help drive forward advances in theory and interventions for youth social withdrawal as an emerging issue in developed countries.

### Keywords

Youth social withdrawal, hikikomori, contemporary youth issue, attachment, psychosocial development

Figure 2. A conceptual framework of youth social withdrawal illustrating the interplay of psychological (overdependent, maladaptive interdependent and counterdependent social withdrawal type), social (family, school and society) and behavioral (social withdrawal behaviors and intervention types) factors. The social withdrawal process shows youth social withdrawal at different stages.

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Withdrawal behaviors	Interventions
Over dep en den t	Family Family's overprotection	Family Deprivation in terms of developm ent and autonomy	Family Over reliance on parental support	Asocial Secluding themselves at home	Therapeutic of
Maladaptive interdependent	Family Dysfunctional family dynamics and parenting	School Bullying Fall behind in studies	<b>School</b> School truancy and dropout Discontinuation of studies	Asocial Going out occasionally	Social withdrawa
Counterdependent	Family High expectations	School High academic pressure Struggle for direct transition from school to work	<b>Society</b> Unemployment	Selectively social Secluding themselves at home or going out occasionally	Educational
Social withdrawal process				► Relap se	
		Nhat will be	a tha conce	auoncos?	

What will be the consequences?

Article

The prevalence and correlates of severe social withdrawal (hikikomori) in Hong Kong: A cross-sectional telephone-based survey study International Journal of Social Psychiatry 1–13 © The Author(s) 2014 Reprints and permissions: sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav DOI: 10.1177/0020764014543711 isp.sagepub.com

Paul WC Wong<sup>1</sup>, Tim MH Li<sup>1</sup>, Melissa Chan<sup>2</sup>, YW Law<sup>1</sup>, Michael Chau<sup>3</sup>, Cecilia Cheng<sup>4</sup>, KW Fu<sup>5</sup>, John Bacon-Shone<sup>6</sup> and Paul SF Yip<sup>1,2</sup>

### Abstract

**Background:** Severe social withdrawal behaviors among young people have been a subject of public and clinical concerns. **Aims:** This study aimed to explore the prevalence of social withdrawal behaviors among young people aged 12–29 years in Hong Kong.

Methods: A cross-sectional telephone-based survey was conducted with 1,010 young individuals. Social withdrawal behaviors were measured with the proposed research diagnostic criteria for *hikikomori* and were categorized according to the (a) international proposed duration criterion (more than 6 months), (b) local proposed criterion (less than 6 months) and (c) with withdrawal behaviors but self-perceived as non-problematic. The correlates of social withdrawal among the three groups were examined using multinomial and ordinal logistic regression analyses.

**Results:** The prevalence rates of more than 6 months, less than 6 months and self-perceived non-problematic social withdrawal were 1.9%, 2.5% and 2.6%, respectively. In terms of the correlates, the internationally and locally defined socially withdrawn youths are similar, while the self-perceived non-problematic group is comparable to the comparison group.

**Conclusions:** The study finds that the prevalence of severe social withdrawal in Hong Kong is comparable to that in Japan. Both groups with withdrawal behaviors for more or less than 6 months share similar characteristics and are related to other contemporary youth issues, for example, compensated dating and self-injury behavior. The self-perceived non-problematic group appears to be a distinct group and the withdrawal behaviors of its members may be discretionary.



# Withdrawal experience and possible way-outs from withdrawal behavior in young people

## Tim MH Li

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### Lucia Liu and Paul WC Wong

Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

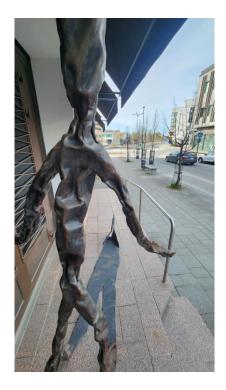
Three reasons for stop being withdrawn:

- 1. Rebalancing one's ideal self with reality;
- 2. Reestablishing relationships with tuned-in people; and
- 3. Regaining momentum in life.



Qualitative Social Work 0(00) 1–19 © The Author(s) 2017 Reprints and permissions: sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav DOI: 10.1177/1473325016688369 journals.sagepub.com/home/qsw











Participants calling themselves Kwai (Jeft) and Ah Ching play with dogs during a Chinese Evangelical Zion Church Social Service Division press conference. Photo: Edward Wong

# THERAPY DOGS LEAD YOUNG **TO OVERCOME SOCIAL FEARS**

Animal interaction programme is proving an effective first step to help withdrawn residents defeat inhibitions and get back into work or study

#### Kathy Gao and Lai Ying-kit

Therapy dogs have proven to be very effective in beinging young, withdrawn Hongkongers out of their shells, University of Hong Kong researchers say.

Participants of animal-assisted therapy are more likely to go back to school or look for a job. rather than continuing to stay cooped up at home, surfing the internet, an HKU study shows.

Saidh therapy was particularly successful in raising the selfesteem of reclusive people who might otherwise shy away from engaging in social interaction that did not involve animals, the pearancher's said.

the animals could help because they were not "demanding orexpecting certain achievements"

from their human friends. The two-year study examined 68 socially withdrawn subjects created by her school life and is aged between 13 and 29. All were working to rebuild the social from a programme by the Chi-

nese Evangelical Zion Church Social Service Division that had used animals to help more than 200 people with social inhibitions since 2010,

"About 80 per cent have either gone back to work or school." the division's general secretary Ng Yan-bo said.

In the project by HKU's social work and social administration department, the participants' as cosso

A psychiatrist explained that employment rate rose from 7 per cent to about SS per cent after they took part in the therapy.

One 18-year-old participant. who called herself Ah Ching, has banished the disillusionment



### Now, I am more willing to say 'good morning' to strangers

connections she has cot since Secondary Four.

Through contact with therapist dog "Fat Fat" and a class on pet grooming. Als Ching said she now saw a need for change.

"I have overcome the fear of social contact," she said. "Now, I am more willing to say 'good morning' to strangers, which I had no courage to do in the past."

In her job as a restaurant bartender, which she secured last month. Ab Ching said she would try to show her care for others. "I would ask if my colleagues are angry, and make some food for therm if they are," she said.

Ng said the therapy generally lasted about a year before the subjects were confident enough to go back to work or study.

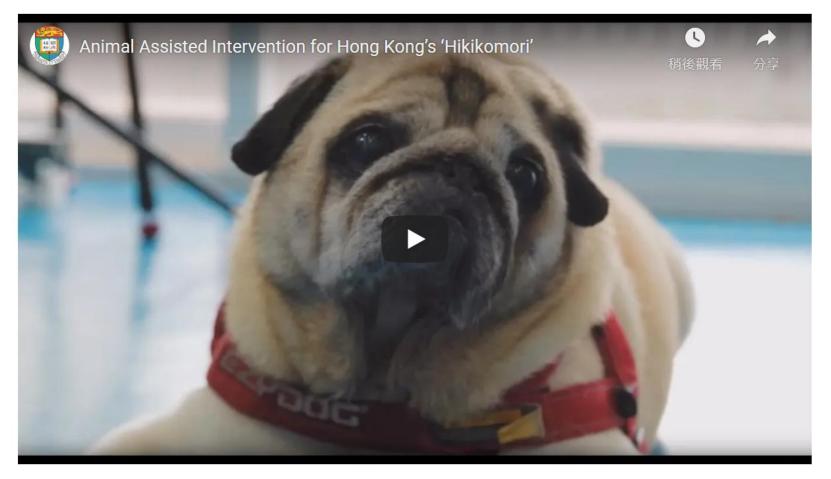
A separate HKU survey found about 1.9 per cent of Hongkongers aged between 13 to 29, translating into 36,900 to 41,000 young people, were socially withdrawn.

The government has no service to help socially withdrawn people, who, according to psychiatrist Dr William Fan Takwing, tend to stay home and play omline games to avoid social life.

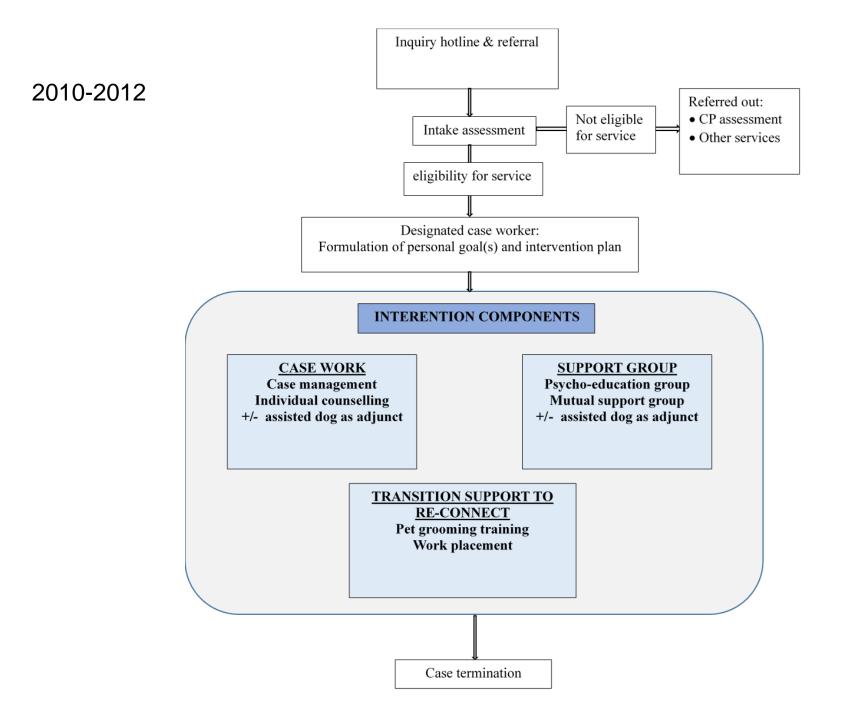
Fan said animal-assisted therapy focused on how to interact with animals rather than talking about the problems those people faced. That made them more wiffing to talk to counsellors.

"But animals act only as a hridge between professional counsellors and the socially withdrawn," Fan, president of the Animal Therapy Foundation. said. "The most important thing is the advice counsellors give. The haman-animal interaction is like a mirror reflecting problems they might have when interacting writts citherns."

# Anımal Assisted Intervention for Hong Kong's 'Hikikomori'



https://www.ke.hku.hk/story/video/hidden-youth



	Pre- intervention Mean (SD)	Post- intervention Mean (SD)	t	95% CI
Withdrawn behaviors	3.16 (0.69)	2.51 (0.72)	9.24***	0.52-0.80
Item 1_Stay home all day long	3.93 (.98)	2.70 (1.19)	10.469***	.99-1.46
Item 2_Avoid social	2.84 (1.13)	2.33 (.97)	5.008***	.3171
interaction				
Item 3_Leave my room for	2.67 (1.06)	2.18 (.96)	4.942***	.3070
school/work				
Item 4_Not feeling	3.20 (1.04)	2.82 (.92)	3.854***	.1857
embarrassed for social				
interaction				

Table 3. Paired-sample T-test for the change of pre- and post-withdrawn behaviors N = 146

Note. \**p*<.05; \*\**P*<.01; \*\*\**p*<.001

the AAT component was attractive because the nonhuman animals made them feel respected and loved. This pilot study showed that a multicomponent program with a case management model correlated with increased levels of self-esteem and perceived employability, and a decreased level of social interaction anxiety. In addition, using nonhuman animals in a social service setting appears to be a good strategy to engage difficult-to-engage young people.



Check for updates

## Reengaging Youth with Prolonged Social Withdrawal Behaviours in Hong Kong: Efficacy of an Intervention Programme Involving Human and Non-human Partners

Paul W. C. Wong<sup>a</sup> (b), Xuebing Su<sup>b</sup> (b), Rose W. M. Yu<sup>a</sup>, and Tim M. H. Li<sup>c</sup> (b)

<sup>a</sup>Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China; <sup>b</sup>Department of Applied Social Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China; <sup>c</sup>Department of Psychiatry, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong, China

### ABSTRACT

This study examined the efficacy of a multicomponent intervention program for reengaging youth with prolonged social withdrawal behaviors (YPSW) in Hong Kong. Highlighting the involvement of more approachable others encompassing human and non-human partners, the intervention program included case work, group work, and transitional support activities for re-connecting YPSW to community. It turned out that 225 participants, counting as 75% of all participants, who were not in education or employment before enrolling into the program, have managed to find a full-time (i.e. 28.8% of all participants) or part-time (11.2%) job, or resume schooling (35.2%) after going through the program. Significant pre-post changes were identified in terms of reduced socially withdrawn behaviors and social interaction anxiousness, and enhanced self-esteem and perceived self-employability. The paper discussed the implications for informing multicomponent intervention work and research study for reengaging YPSWs accordingly.

### **KEYWORDS**

animal-assisted intervention; Hikikomori; human and non-human partners; more approachable others; youth with prolonged social withdrawal behaviors



Epidemics, such as COVID-19, expose issues of avoidable health inequalities, bringing the 'slow burn of injustice' to light (Marmot, 2020). Specific groups, already experiencing inequalities before the outbreak, are likely to become more vulnerable (Holmes et al., 2020). The potential costs of societal and health services, introduced to assist vulnerable young people with their re-integration into society, are likely to be substantial. Governments thus need to anticipate and prepare for the advent of this emerging situation and intervene at an early stage to prevent the loss of skills and resources that young people can contribute to the world.

In the context of Hong Kong's social unrest since June 2019, a deterioration in the mental health of Hong Kong people has already been documented, with increased prevalence rates of suspected depression and post-traumatic stress disorder at 11.2 % and 12.8 %, respectively (Ni et al., 2020). Events such as the social unrest, and COVID-19, have impacted severely on the young people of Hong Kong, in particular those who were arrested, have poor family relationships for political reasons, and those who have special learning or health needs. In 2018, our team was generously funded HKD4.5 million by the Keswick Foundation to develop and evaluate our new school-based prc

Promotion of Empathy and Prosocial Behaviour among P.2 to P.3 Children through a 6-session Humane Education and Social and Emotional Learning Curriculum with trained dogs in Hong Kong









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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

Effectiveness of a school-based programme of animal-assisted humane education in Hong Kong for the promotion of social and emotional learning: A quasi-experimental pilot study



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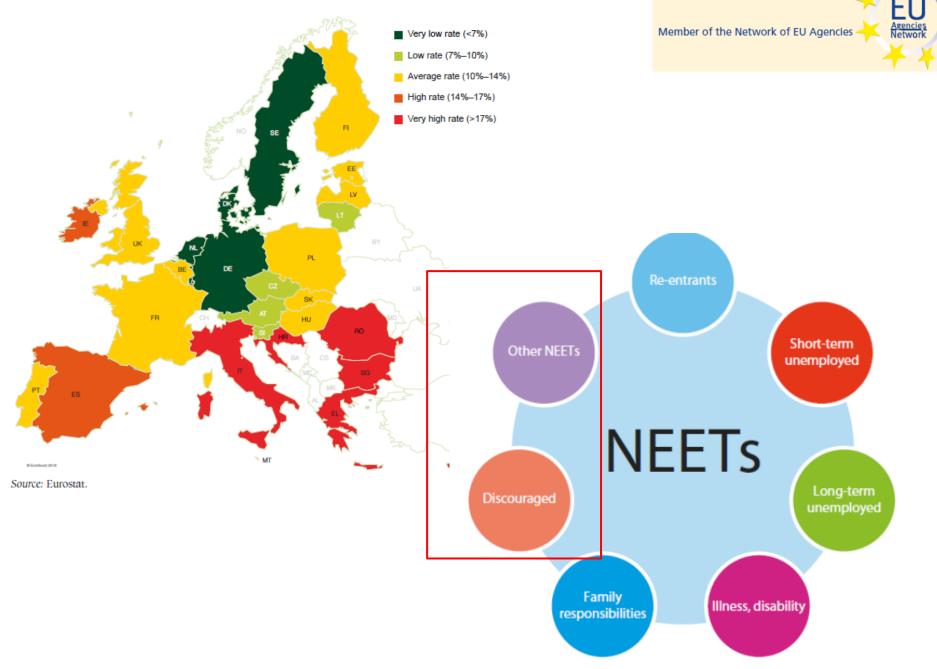
# https://www.aai.socialwork.hku.hk/



# EMOTIONS RUN HIGH ON HONG KONG'S DSE RESULTS DA

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# WHY SO SERIOUS???!



## "One's Social Skills Go to the Dogs": The Potential of Social Media to Elicit Information on Socially Withdrawn Youths in Finland

## Hanna Kirjavainen Harri Jalonen

**Abstract:** Youths who are socially isolated are largely inaccessible to social work professionals; nevertheless, most are active on social media. Feeling they have been let down by society, many such youths seek comfort in imageboards, where the idea of being anti-social is cherished and where even extremism and hate speech is tolerated. This study relies on a thematic analysis of 323 imageboard messages to identify the challenges socially withdrawn youths perceive as excluding them from society. We use the capability approach as our viewpoint, emphasizing the youths' actual capabilities to join in, as opposed to the opportunities seemingly provided by society. Our results resonate with the earlier research: Many members of the group labeled 'withdrawn youth' suffer from neuropsychological and mental health problems, fear social situations, experience a sense of shame and failure, and harbor bitterness toward society. They consider issues including unsuitable services, the onerous demands imposed by working life, and the hard values prevalent in society to restrict their opportunities to participate in that society and undermine their self-respect. Fear and negative experiences prevent socially withdrawn people from approaching social workers. Accordingly, we recommend social services keep an open mind on using digital options to reach people beyond the conventional service system.

Hanna Kirjavainen, MS, Senior lecturer, Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland. Harri Jalonen, PhD, Professor, University of Vaasa, Finland.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Estimating the prevalence and characteristics of people in severe social isolation in 29 European countries: A secondary analysis of data from the European Social Survey round 9 (2018–2020)

### Simone Amendola<sup>1\*</sup>, Rita Cerutti<sup>2</sup>, Agnes von Wyl<sup>1</sup>

 Department of Applied Psychology, Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Zurich, Switzerland,
 Department of Dynamic and Clinical Psychology, Health Studies, Sapienza–University of Rome, Rome, Italy

> The study protocol was preregistered online on the Open Science Framework (https://osf.io/ 6a7br/). The weighted prevalence of severe social isolation was 2.01% for the sample from the ESS 1, 1.77% for the sample from the ESS 9, and 1.71% for the sample from the ESS indicating a decrease over time, mainly in males. Logistic regression models showed that different sociodemographic factors (e.g., being retired, being permanently sick or disabled, doing housework, living in Central and Eastern Europe, living uncomfortably on household income, having no income) were associated with severe social isolation. Further, feeling unsafe when walking alone in the neighbourhood after dark, low social trust, and support, decreased happiness and lack of future planning correlated with severe social isolation after adjustment for the effect of sociodemographic factors was made. In this study, the prevalence of severe social isolation as a proxy for hikikomori in European countries is in line with that found by previous representative studies conducted in Asian countries. The novelty of the findings as well as implications for hikikomori research are discussed according to recent scientific literature.

# Measures

**Severe social isolation as a proxy for high risk of hikikomori.** For the purpose of the present study, the following indicators were considered to identify individuals in severe social isolation with high risk of hikikomori based on lack of social interaction and participation: 1) social meeting with friends, relatives or colleagues less than once a month or never, 2) taking part in social activities less than most or much less than most compared to others of same age, 3) not working (or not away temporarily) during the last week, 4) not actively looking for a job during the last week and 5) not being in education (not paid for by employer), even if on vacation, during the last week. If all five indicators were present, an individual was classified as in severe social isolation. Therefore, the condition examined dif-

country, region of Europe according to EuroVoc divided in Northern (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden), Southern (Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Spain), Western (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Switzerland, United Kingdom), and Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, Montenegro, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia), highest level of education, years of education

### 4. Estimates of the total costs

THE UNIVERSITY of York

4.1 Table 4.1 presents the composition of the 208,196 NEET population by age and gender. These estimates are used to calculate the economic costs attributable to the NEET population in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1: NEET Population aged 16-18

Age	Total	Male	Female
16	33,773	21,351	12,422
17	61,279	33,174	28,105
18	113,144	62,516	50,628
All	208,196	117,041	91,155

4.2 The total current term costs show a resource cost of £1.8 billion and a public finance cost of almost £1.7 billion. The majority of these costs are a result of underemployment due to educational underachievement, unemployment and

economic inactivity. The majority of the public finance costs consist of payments in unemployment benefits (JSA) and Housing Benefit to those who are not working and tax losses through direct taxes and reduced indirect tax yields due to lower consumer expenditure.

	Table 4.2 The	economic costs	attributable to t	he NEET population	
--	---------------	----------------	-------------------	--------------------	--

CURRENT COSTS	Resource cost	Public finance
Educational Underachievement		
Unemployed	£79,366,751	
Underemployed	£32,016,602	
		£1,199,238,148
Unemployment	£429,680,191	
Inactivity	£766,541,549	
Teenage mothers	£432,843,048	£453,866,079
Crime	£61,382,528	£7,819,683
Poor health	£413,022	£413,022
Substance misuse	£1,335,458	£1,335,458
Sub-total	£1,803,579,148	£1,662,672,388
MEDIUM TERM COSTS		
Educational Underachievement (low		
estimate)	£2,221,895,298	£7,216,038,780
Unemployment (low estimate)	£16,928,726,082	
Educational Underachievement (high est)	£8,606,225,493	£27,950.397,552
Unemployment (high estimate)	£65,571,241,853	
Early Motherhood	2202,803,048	£2,185,747,288
Crime	£461,052,180	£67,309,377
Poor Health	£7,759,321	£7,759,321
Substance abuse	£11,495,200	£11,495,200
Sub-totals (low estimate)	£19,913,791,129	£9,488,349,966
Sub-totals (high estimate)	£74,940,637,095	£30,222,708,738
LONG TERM COSTS		
Tax loss		£383,339,717
Additional benefits		£187,225,963
Sub-total		£570,565,680
FINAL TOTAL (low estimate)	£21,717,370,278	£11,721,588,036
(high estimate)	£76,744,216,244	£32,455,946,808

### Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training Research Undertaken for the Audit Commission

Bob Coles, Christine Godfrey, Antonia Keung, Steven Parrott and Jonathan Bradshaw

> Department of Social Policy and Social Work and Department of Health Sciences



An ageing Hong Kong needs to end the self-imposed social seclusion of a significant number of its young people. Some efforts are showing promise.





Researchers have been exploring dog-assisted interventions to help youth reintegrate into their communities. (Picture: Chinese Evangelical Zion

## https://360info.org/hong-kong-works-towin-back-its-secluded-youth/

### Asian Journal of Psychiatry 93 (2024) 103925



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Letter to the editor

Emerging trends in Hikikomori behaviour among young people in China: Implications for research and policy



Keywords Hikikomori Prolonged social withdrawal behaviour China Commentary

China's rapidly aging population and low natural population growth rate are accompanied by several youth development challenges, including a rising unemployment rate, low salary, high work pressure, and longer working hours. These challenges have led to a pessimistic attitude towards life and relationships among some young people in China. It is concerned that an emerging trend of young people with prolonged social withdrawal, also known as hikikomori behaviour, has appeared in China recently (Hu et al., 2022). Hikikomori, a form of pathological social withdrawal behavior that was first identified in Japan, describes youth and young adults who largely become recluses most of the time (mainly in their parents' homes) and do not engage in education, employment, or training for at least over three (Li and Wong, 2015). Also, people who have prolonged social withdrawal for a period are more likely to experience marginalization, dependence, loneliness, increased drug use, and self-harm or suicidal behaviour (Zhu et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2015). If left unattended, hikikomori behaviour among young people in China may lead to a shortage of skills and resources among future generations and costly to this aging country (Liu the younger generation. Probably influenced by the "learned helplessness" experiences, some young people embrace the "Lying Flat" attitude that advocates for alternative lifestyle as low-desire, low-effort, lowcost, and stress-free (Zhou, 2023) and live a "Bai Lan" life, that is, to stop making efforts but taking a more passive attitude. If this gloomy attitudes towards life and relationships among the young people in China left unattended, some young people may develop prolonged social withdrawal behaviour. China is the second most populous country with a population of around 1.4 billion individuals, even a small proportion of young people become Hikikomori will equal many young individuals. By far, the number of studies about Hikikomori in China is very limited. Wong et al. (2017) and Liu et al. (2018) attempted to examine the presence of Hikikomori behaviour through reaching out to young people with such behaviour through social media and gaming websites in China and explored the opinions about its existence through the clinical experiences of social workers in Shanghai, respectively. More recently, Hu et al. (2022) conducted an online survey distributed through WeChat, a Chinese instant messaging, social media, and mobile payment app that . . . . . . .

# **MY LITTLE GIFT**



What is IKIGAI? How IKIKAI helps us to find meaning of life? IKIGAI ?





# I am thankful that Drs Tim Li and Rose Yu were awarded PhDs from this line of studies.

## **Project Collaborator:**

Chinese Evangelical Zion Church Social Service

Division



## **Overseas Collaborators**

Drs Takahiro KATO (Japan), Roseline Yong (Japan), Alan TEO (US), Cynthia Chandler (US), John WONG (Singapore) Gizem Arat (US)

## **Collaborators:**





# kiitos paljon



### THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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