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Develop active interests before retirement for
better well-being after retirement
- A mentorship program for the soon-to-retire persons

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*For many people,
successful retirement is the first
step towards successful aging!*

BUT

Work identity → Non-work identity

A BIG CHALLENGE!!!


A change in life requiring readjustment

- Change → require readjustment → **stress**
- Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Holmes & Rache, 1967; Rache & Authur, 1978)
 - Retirement ranked the 10th among 43 items
 - Score = 45 (c.f. item 1 , death of a spouse, score = 100; item 43, minor violation of law, score = 11)
- Life course theory
 - Retirement: worker identity → elder identity
- Successful transition →
 - Avoid abrupt decline in mental health
 - Enhancement of well-being, e.g. self-acceptance, meaning of life, interpersonal relationship

Role theory

- If highly invested in a particular role (e.g. work role), one's feelings of self-worth tend to be associated with ability to carry out that role → positive self-esteem (Ashforth, 2001)
- Facing loss of the dominant role, need replacements, e.g. partial work role, volunteer role, serious hobbies
- Re-identify with family role?
 - Prerequisite: satisfactory marital/family relationship
 - >50% elderly with a spouse reported marital relationship 'not too enjoyable' (Wang, 2008)

Continuity theory (Engagement theory)

- Remain involved & active → better well-being
 - Preserve and maintain existing internal & external structures (Quick & Moen, 1998)
 - Internal structure
 - Concept of self & identity
 - External structure
 - Roles & activities in physical & social environment
 - Rivalry theory: Disengagement theory (Cumming & Henry, 1961)
 - Social withdrawal → focus on personal growth
 - Empirical data supports continuity theory
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Activity theory

- High level of involvement in meaningful activities → well-being
- Consistent support evidence (Havighurst, 1963; Rowe & Kahn, 1998; Nimord, 2007; Hao, 2008)

Active interests

主動型興趣

- Not all activities have positive impacts (Nimrod, 2007; Leung & Lam, 2008)
- Some show no impacts or even negative impacts (e.g. TV & radio)
- ‘Active’ is a key differentiating concept
 - An involved participant, not merely an observer
 - Demand skills, knowledge
 - Rewarding – intrinsic, extrinsic
- Develop new interests after retirement is rarer and more difficult → Preferably to have enduring active interests developed before retirement

Current HRM practice for preparing soon-to-retire staff

- Provide information booklet +/- one-off seminar
- To effect real behavioral changes, more intensive input is needed
- However there is resources implications that may not be acceptable to most corporations
- Using recently successfully retired people as mentor can be a **cost-effective, 'win-win', self-rolling solution!**

Our retirement preparation program

- Entry point:
 - A positive anchor: develop active interest
- Intensive but affordable:
 - Making use of successful retirees as mentors

快快發展主動型興趣
退休生活充實有生趣

Self-sustaining

*This year's mentees can be
next year's mentors!*

.....leading to a

'Retirement mutual-help culture'

&

'Active interest culture'

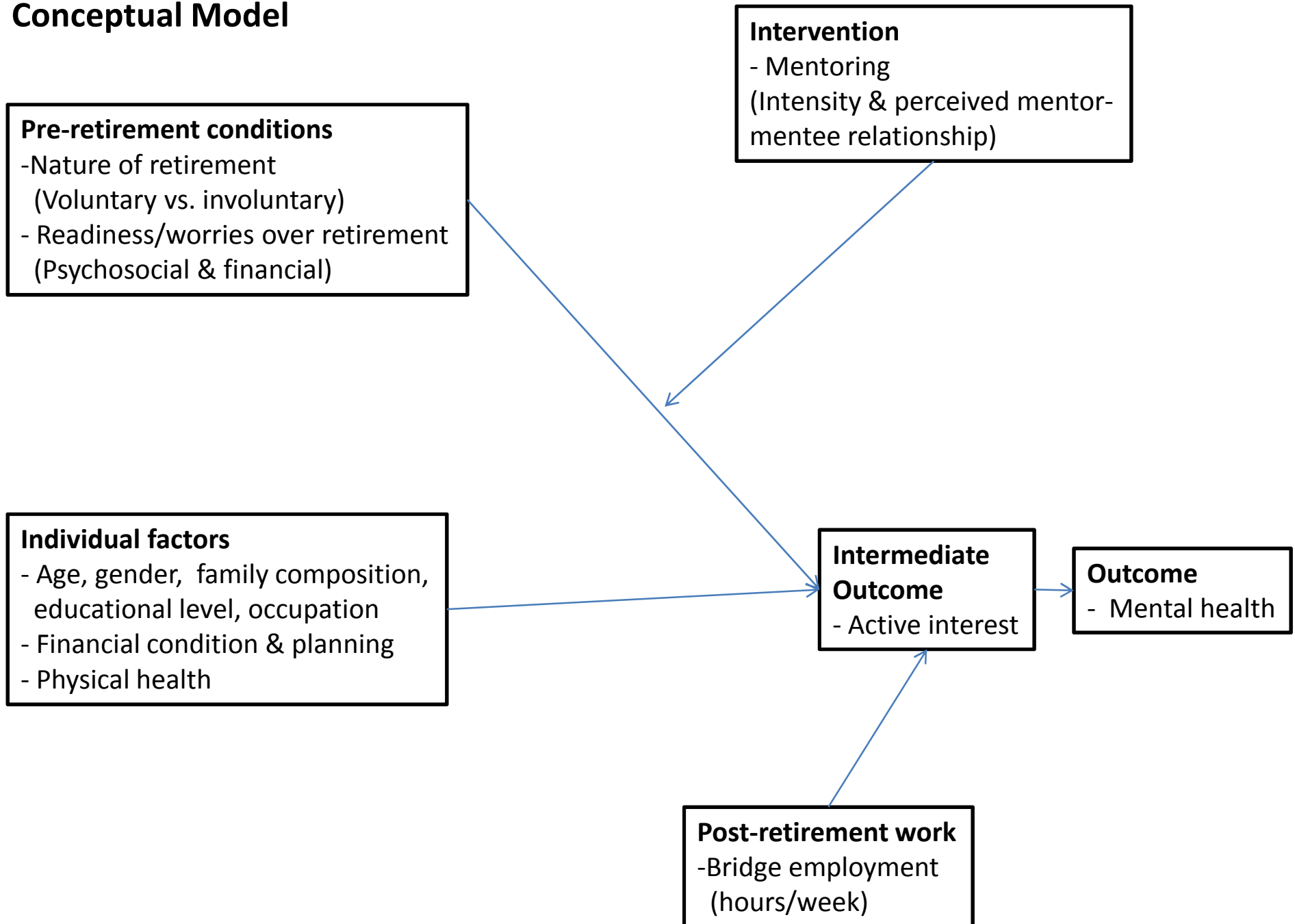
Research gap

- Previous studies
 - Mostly cross-sectional & often relied on recall data by subjects (i.e. retrospective)
 - A few studies adopted longitudinal f/u design (i.e. prospective), but merely observational, not experimental or intervention research
- Despite a consensus view on the importance of developing enduring active interests before retirement, no rigorous intervention research has been conducted so far

Research question

- Can mentoring for developing active interests before retirement lead to better mental health after retirement among the retirees?

Conceptual Model



2-stage study design

Pilot Study

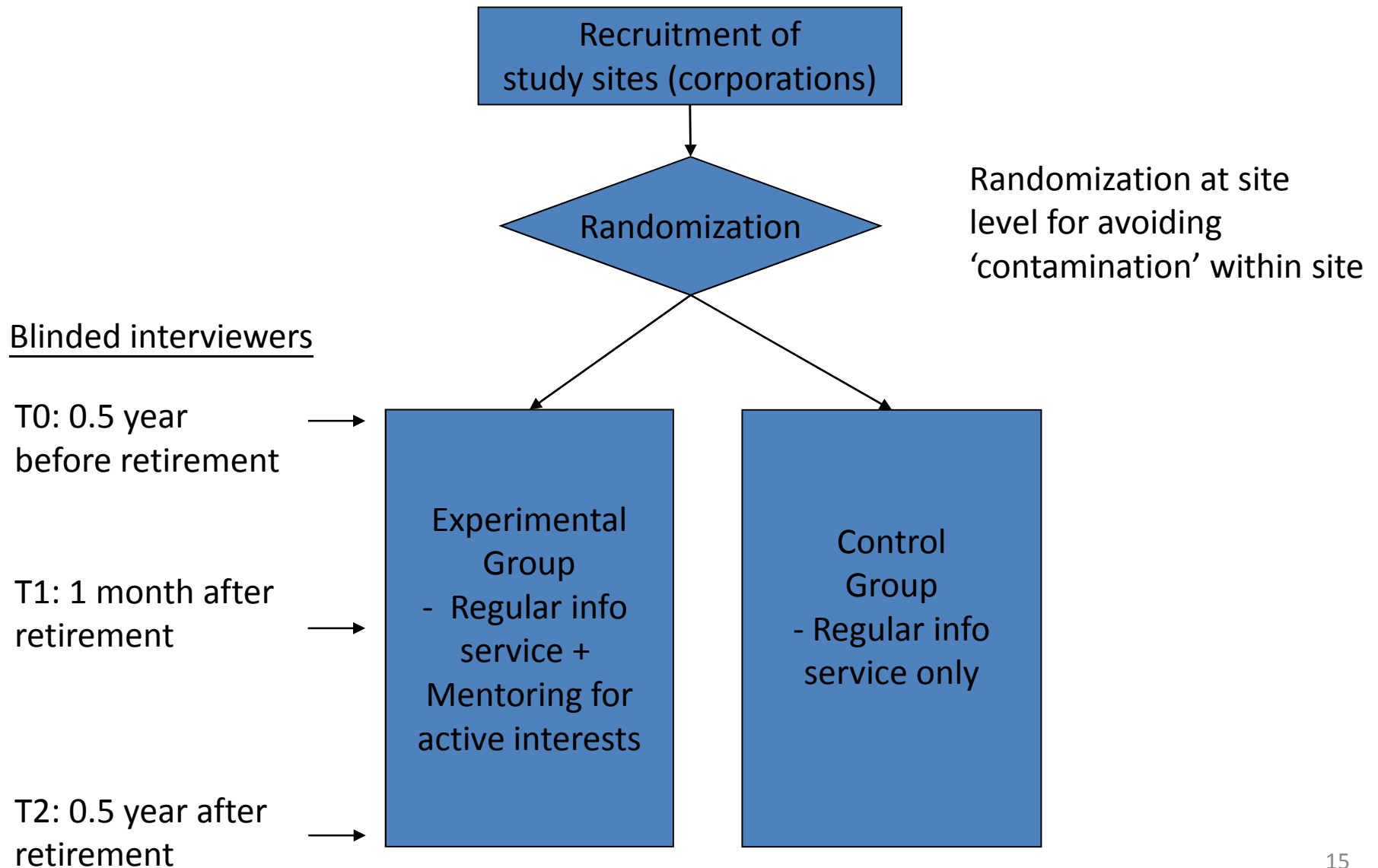


Main Study

1. Develop program materials
 - Resource kit of local leisure interests
 - Guide book for mentor
 - Guide book for mentee
2. Develop training workshop for mentors
 - Tentatively a 4 weekly sessions design
3. Trial run matching and ongoing supervision logistics with ~10 subjects for ~6 months

- Cluster randomized control trial
1. 2-arm design
 2. 55 subjects per arm
 3. Will need 40-50 mentors

Main Study: A Cluster Randomized Controlled Trial



Pilot study – Oct 2009 – June 2010



- Developed all necessary program materials
 - Training workshop for mentors
 - Briefing & info for mentees
 - Resource kit on local active interests
 - Logistics for the mentorship scheme
- Trial run with 10 mentors & mentees
 - Training & matching
 - Ongoing supervision & support
- Results:
 - VERY POSITIVE; ZERO DROP OUT; MOTIVATED TO BECOME FUTURE MENTORS
 - HRM of big corporates show keen interest!

Next step

- Proceed to main study when funding is available

THANKS!

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