

LEE KUM SHEUNG CENTER FOR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



LEE KUM SHEUNG
CENTER FOR
HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

HARVARD T.H. CHAN
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH

CONTENTS

- 1 GREETINGS FROM THE CENTER DIRECTOR
- 2 TRAINING TOMORROW'S LEADERS
- 6 ADVANCING WELL-BEING THROUGH INNOVATIVE COLLABORATIONS
- 8 COMMUNICATING AND TRANSLATING RESEARCH
- 11 NOTABLE RESEARCH: 2022–2023
- 13 LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS: THE CENTER'S EVOLUTION

The mission of the Lee Kum Sheung Center for Health and Happiness is to build a rigorous and interdisciplinary science of positive health, happiness, and well-being with a focus on health equity, and to translate the science to influence practice and policy.



Greetings from the center director

FOR THE SEVENTH YEAR IN A ROW, the Lee Kum Sheung Center for Health and Happiness has continued tirelessly working on the forefront of the ever-expanding science of positive health, happiness, and well-being. As always, we are incredibly thankful for the generosity of the Lee Kum Kee family for making this transformative work possible.

2022–2023 has been a year of transition for the Center, as founding Center Co-Director Laura Kubzansky stepped down from her position in December 2022, but began serving as a special advisor to the Center. We are grateful for her countless contributions in establishing and building the Center, and for the scholarship opportunities and leadership she provided in the field. Kubzansky is a pioneer in positive health, identifying assets that protect and enhance health over the life span, at both the individual level and in the social environment.

I will continue as the sole director—and moving forward, the Center will pivot to focus primarily on **translational science and translational activities in health and happiness**, in addition to an ongoing emphasis on **knowledge production and collaboration**. While some of the programs and research we have undertaken for the last seven years will continue, other projects will change. New areas of research that we hope to focus on include (1) **digital well-being** and (2) **social determinants of health and well-being across the globe**. We will continue to explore and build these research areas and look forward to sharing more information on our activities and programs in the near future.

We have already completed a great deal of work in the area of digital well-being over the last academic year. Last year's workshop on "Social media and well-being: A multidisciplinary dialogue" brought together scholars from across the country with the goals of mitigating the harms and enhancing the benefits of social media for well-being and happiness, as well as considering the introduction of regulatory policies and interventions to best accomplish this. Inspired by the success of this workshop, the Center focused its 2022–2023 seminar series on exploring this timely and significant topic. The series connected individuals across the U.S. to further explore how social media may positively impact physical, emotional, and social well-being and the ways that we can better harness the positive impact of the various platforms. Recordings of all past seminars can be found on the Center website: hsph.harvard.edu/health-happiness/past-events/. To continue offering these valuable programs, we will be convening scholars in the field for an important conversation on issues related to diversity and equity in social media use, well-being, and happiness, and the implications for practice and policy this fall.

Once again, we express our gratitude toward the Lee Kum Kee family for creating a platform upon which this critical research, collaboration, and scientific translation can take place. The ideas born here have the power to build the base for significant contributions to the field, positively affect the study, practice, and policy of health and happiness, and impact individuals, communities, and the world for the better.



Kasisomayajula "Vish" Viswanath
Director of the Lee Kum Sheung Center for Health and Happiness
Lee Kum Kee Professor of Health Communications



TRAINING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Cultivating the research skills and knowledge of the next generation interested in advancing the field of positive health research is essential. The Lee Kum Sheung Center conducted the following programs that have fostered scholarships for talented undergraduate and doctoral students, as well as early career scholars, promoting the science and policy needed to move health and happiness forward around the world.

Summer internship program

THE CENTER HELD ITS SUMMER INTERNSHIP

program in person for the first time in 2022 (previous years had been virtual because of the COVID-19 pandemic), hosting 10 undergraduate and graduate students from around the country. The summer internship program is a paid opportunity that offers training and support to a future generation of scholars interested in studying (1) the linkages between mental well-being and physical health outcomes and (2) the translation of science related to these linkages to inform policy and practice.

As in previous years, interns were placed with Center scholars and affiliates, working as research assistants on projects aligned with the Center's mission. Projects this year included data collection, data analysis, literature reviews, grant writing support, and the development of repositories of information. The Center also organized opportunities for the students to engage in networking and mentorship activities, providing them with a sense of community and professional development.



The Center for Health and Happiness helped me gain a better understanding of psychological outcomes and the importance of research in positive health.

Shivangi Bajpai

2022 Summer Intern, Lee Kum Sheung Center (hosted by the Center for Work, Health, and Well-Being); Doctoral Student in Kinesiology, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Through this internship, I recognized the importance of researching factors that prevent illness, such as resilience and community belonging, which can then be used to influence the development and implementation of primary preventions.

Camille Ianne Marquez

2022 Summer Intern, Lee Kum Sheung Center (hosted by the Department of Epidemiology); Undergraduate Student in Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles



This summer I was afforded the opportunity to work on many skills, professional and educational. I hoped to learn more about clinical research and was able to do so and much more... This internship has affirmed that I am capable of doing the research I one day hope to conduct.

Alexandra René

2022 Summer Intern, Lee Kum Sheung Center (hosted by the Health Promotion and Resiliency Intervention Research Program at Massachusetts General Hospital); Undergraduate Student in Neuroscience and Global Health and Health Policy, Harvard College

Summer short course



IN JULY 2022, the Lee Kum Sheung Center for Health and Happiness and the Research Department of Behavioural Science and Health at University College London (UCL) hosted the second annual summer short course, focused on exploring the linkages between emotional well-being and physical health outcomes. Held in person for the first time, the course brought together 32 early career scholars from nine countries for an exciting week of learning, engaging, and networking in London. The Lee Kum Kee Family Foundation generously provided scholarships for six of these participants.

Under the direction of Laura Kubzansky, former Center co-director, and Andrew Steptoe, Center scientific advisory board member and head of the Research Department of Behavioural Science and Health at UCL, this five-day interdisciplinary course covered topics including epidemiology, genetics, interventions, social determinants, biobehavioral processes, and methodology. The course provided attendees with a systematic and rigorous overview of the relationship between positive emotional well-being and physical health, drawing on a variety of empirical methods with careful consideration of measurement issues.

The course focused on identifying positive assets that promote health, including understanding critical components that underlie not only well-being but also resilience. This is particularly relevant now, as the world continues to grapple with the devastating COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. This was an opportune moment to bring together what we know about well-being and resilience, and to share resources with the next generation of scholars and practitioners.

BY THE NUMBERS:

32 course participants **9** nationalities

5 days

6 Lee Kum Kee Family Foundation scholarship recipients

Through participating in the course, I now have a better understanding of the value of focusing on positive social relationships and harmonious family experiences, which are beneficial to physical health and well-being.

Summer Short Course Participant

Dissertation research awards

THE LEE KUM SHEUNG CENTER FOR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS granted two dissertation research awards for the 2022–2023 academic year. The dissertation research award program assists full-time doctoral students at Harvard University who are conducting dissertation research in the field of positive health science or another closely related field. Through this program, the Center seeks to involve students in its work to (1) build a rigorous science of positive health and well-being and (2) translate science into practice and policy.



HAYAMI KOGA, MPH '16, PHD '23
 Doctoral candidate
 Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences
 Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

Psychological well-being and its association to motor function, parkinsonism, and cardiometabolic biomarkers

Hayami Koga’s dissertation investigates whether positive psychological well-being plays a role in the maintenance of motor functioning and development of parkinsonism in aging populations, as well as the neurobiological mechanisms underlying the link between positive psychological well-being and health outcomes. Her research will also investigate the racial and ethnic differences in these associations. She hypothesizes that positive psychological well-being will be associated with reduced risk of motor decline and healthier trajectories of parkinsonism, and that these associations will be evident across racial groups.



BETH STELSON, PHD '24
 Doctoral candidate
 Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences
 Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

The effect of supportive work environments and vicarious trauma on the physical health of hospital workers: A multilevel mediation and moderation analysis

Beth Stelson’s dissertation investigates how vicarious trauma (defined as the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the trauma experiences of another) affects the physical health of nurses and patient care workers enrolled in the Boston Hospital Workers Health Study, and how components of a supportive work environment may beneficially diminish these effects. As a first step in this research, she will examine the association between vicarious trauma exposure and worker health insurance claims; and as a second step, she will assess the degree to which a supportive work environment modifies the relationship between vicarious trauma exposure and physical health outcomes. She hypothesizes that (1) greater vicarious trauma exposure will be associated with greater odds of experiencing an adverse physical health outcome, and (2) the effect of vicarious trauma exposure on health outcomes will vary by level of supportive work environment, as measured by people-oriented culture, coworker support, and supervisor support.



ADVANCING WELL-BEING THROUGH INNOVATIVE COLLABORATIONS



The Lee Kum Sheung Center works with partners across the globe to put health and happiness scholarship into practice. By engaging with local and global organizations on their interventions, we are advancing the field of positive health research and the well-being of participants involved in studies.

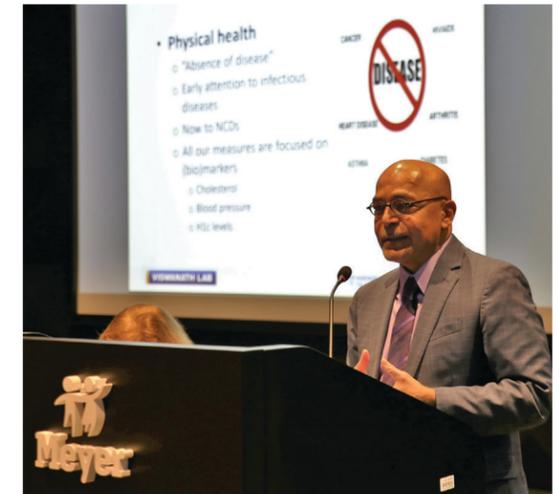


SALAAM BOMBAY FOUNDATION

THE SALAAM BOMBAY FOUNDATION (SBF) works with school children across Mumbai, India, with the goal of empowering students to stay in school and make positive decisions about their futures. SBF programs work with children both in school and through additional activities, providing educational programs that focus on fostering life skills, educating about tobacco risks, and promoting healthy behaviors and positive health.

The Lee Kum Sheung Center is collaborating with SBF to conduct a longitudinal study to track students over time, following them through their school years and beyond to determine how exposure to SBF programming and other life events impact their health and well-being. The purpose of the SBF longitudinal study is twofold: 1) to gather valuable data on the health communication behaviors, availability of assets, and resilience of youth to determine how these factors are associated with health and well-being, and 2) to directly chart how SBF programs impact outcomes for students who attended SBF-sponsored schools compared to those who did not. The first wave of the collaborative study was conducted with seventh graders in Mumbai schools between February and March 2020.

While the continuation of wave one was halted by the COVID-19 pandemic, wave two of the study will include a new cohort of seventh grade students from intervention and control schools. The purpose and aims of the study will stay the same and a similar questionnaire will be administered to the students. However, appropriate modifications will be put in place to incorporate the changes made to the SBF program post pandemic. Among these changes will be an increased emphasis on measuring mental, physical, and social well-being to reflect SBF's inclusion of well-being as a central focus of current and future program activities.



MEYER CENTER FOR HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

THE LEE KUM SHEUNG CENTER recently began a collaboration with the newly opened Meyer Center for Health and Happiness (MCHH). The MCHH was established within the Meyer Children's Hospital (Florence, Italy) with the aim of developing action-research interventions and programs to promote the health and well-being of children and adolescents in their life contexts, primarily in the school environment but also in the community. The focus of the MCHH is to strengthen the life skills of children and adolescents and enhance their psychosocial and emotional resources. Its aim is to ultimately combat inequalities in access to opportunities, enabling these children and adolescents to reach their full potential for health and well-being. The MCHH intends to achieve this through the construction of networks at the local, national, and international level by involving schools, universities, the health care system, and other societal institutions.

On February 3, Center Director Vish Viswanath gave the keynote address at the launch of the MCHH, beginning a fruitful partnership. By sharing their expertise, both Centers will gain access to new knowledge and perspectives and extend their reach across the globe.



COMMUNICATING AND TRANSLATING RESEARCH

The Lee Kum Sheung Center promotes the sharing and translation of new ideas into policymaking, advocacy, and organizational strategies. By bringing together colleagues from institutions around the world, the Center enables the field of positive health research to have a real-world impact.

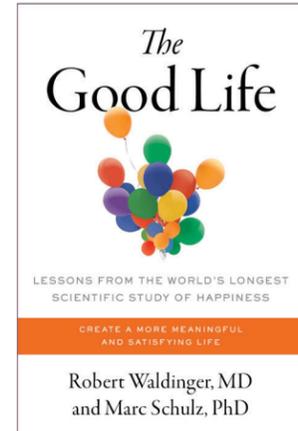
Seminar series

LAUNCHED IN 2016, the Center's seminar series has two broad focus areas: (1) to systematically and rigorously pursue the relationship between positive well-being and physical health, drawing on a variety of empirical methods and (2) to develop effective models of translation and communication of these findings to influence public health practice and policy. The seminar series aims to spark conversations around health, happiness, and well-being. The talks are open to the public, but primarily draw attendees from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and other schools at Harvard University. The audience typically consists of faculty members, students, postdoctoral researchers, and staff, as well as other academic professionals and practitioners from Harvard and other institutions spanning the globe. In the 2022–2023 academic year, attendees have the option to join the seminars either in-person or virtually.

This year's seminar series theme is "Digital media and well-being." These seminars examine the evidence underlying social media's impact on well-being, happiness, and health, and consider how the information gained can be shared with the public and policymakers to mitigate negative impacts and harness the potential for positive impacts on population health, happiness, and well-being.

On December 7, the Center hosted a seminar presented by University of Michigan Professor of Psychology and Management/Organizations Ethan Kross, titled "Social media and well-being: Pitfalls, progress, and next steps." Kross reviewed his nearly two decades of research on social media, describing the ongoing debate between negative and positive effects of social media on user well-being. He explained the emerging consensus, that social media use results in small negative effects which aggregate over time, but cautioned against drawing premature conclusions, arguing that future research needs to be more nuanced in its approach and systematic in its methods. He suggested that understanding the psychological processes that underpin social media behaviors can help in explaining when communication technologies can promote well-being. Kross recommended that the next step of social media research be characterized by interventions that teach people how to safely navigate social media environments.

» **You can learn more about Kross' seminar here:** hsph.harvard.edu/health-happiness/2022/12/07/seminar-series-dr-ethan-kross



On February 27, Robert Waldinger, clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, joined us for a virtual discussion of his new book, *The Good Life*. Attended by more than 800 viewers from 44 countries, this event involved a presentation by Waldinger of the findings published in his book—that social connections are predictors of both well-being and physical health; that we are in a pandemic of loneliness, but we can improve our situations by structuring our lives intentionally and focusing on our relationships.

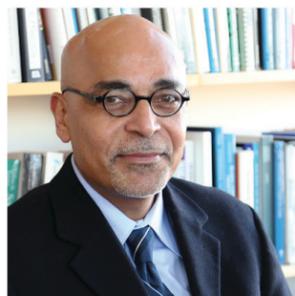
» **You can learn more about Waldinger's seminar here:** hsph.harvard.edu/health-happiness/2023/02/27/the-good-life-a-discussion-with-dr-robert-waldinger/

Case study

ONE OF THE PREVIOUS PROJECTS of the Center examined how c-suite leaders promote employee, community, customer, and environmental well-being through their leadership. Center Director Vish Viswanath interviewed more than 20 c-suite leaders to probe how they perceive the connection between these four dimensions and how they put their workplace principles into practice. As a continuation of that effort, Viswanath has begun working on an in-depth case study of the Lee Kum Kee company to determine how the company's philosophy of "Si Ji Li Ren," which roughly translates to "consider others' interests before acting," is operationalized and followed in practice. The case study will be used to teach students, providing an illustration of how the workplace could be a site for promoting well-being and happiness.

Social media workshop commentary

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp, are Internet-based networks that have transformed the way we communicate and interact over the past two decades. The Center held a two-day social media workshop from April 19–20, 2022, gathering 19 scholars from across the country to discuss differing views and conflicting findings, with the aim of informing future research and policymaking. This workshop was motivated by two major developments: (1) growing concern amongst the general public, researchers, and educators about the potentially detrimental effects of social media on well-being, and (2) the response of policymakers and advocates leading to efforts to regulate social media and limit its harmful effects on young people.



This workshop was led by (from left to right) Center Director Vish Viswanath, Center Research Scientist Mesfin Bekalu, and Center Research Fellow Laura Marciano.

Workshop attendees acknowledged that in order to mitigate the harms and enhance the benefits of social media for well-being, regulatory policies and interventions based on scientific consensus are urgently needed. After the completion of the workshop, the attendees wrote a commentary, which is currently under review in preparation for publication.

The commentary highlights key conclusions that workshop participants came to about the next steps in research and policy. Additionally, the workshop participants recommend that parents and educators teach digital citizenship skills to promote the responsible use of technology, setting youth on healthier trajectories early on.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS INCLUDE:

- 1 Capture users' different experiences with activities on social media
- 2 Consider how social media could be used to promote well-being
- 3 Consider the role of contextual factors, such as class, race, and place, in either amplifying or curtailing the positive or negative effects of social media use on health and well-being
- 4 Conduct more research in global settings, particularly in low- and middle-income countries

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICYMAKERS INCLUDE:

- 1 Consider the strength of evidence for any kind of intervention
- 2 Incorporate national monitoring of social media use into existing government panels and longitudinal studies
- 3 Bring "big tech" companies to the table to create a productive conversation about potential policy frameworks to minimize or prevent detrimental effects of social media



NOTABLE RESEARCH: 2022–2023

The Lee Kum Sheung Center's leadership, scholars, and affiliate scientists continue to publish cutting-edge research that improves the understanding of lifestyle factors that impact health and happiness, as well as interventions that improve well-being.



Center Affiliate Scientist Tyler VanderWeele and others examined a random, cross-sectional sample of 2,363 United States citizens, and found a number of trends linking demographic factors with flourishing or “complete well-being.” Among other correlations, they found that **well-being across gender and race/ethnicity tends to increase with age.**

» [Learn more: doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13769-7](https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13769-7)

Center Director Vish Viswanath and Research Fellow Laura Marciano explored the longitudinal link between screen time and adolescents’ mental health before and after the lockdown in a sample of 674 Swiss adolescents. Researchers found that time spent on **social media had a small negative effect on mental health**; but also that getting involved in media-structured activities like television viewing might protect against mental health symptoms.

» [Learn more: doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2022.981881](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2022.981881)

Center affiliates Christopher Celano, Bettina Hoepfner, Jeffrey Huffman, Rachel Millstein, and others conducted a review of 27 studies on positive psychological interventions and health behaviors—and found that in 19 of those studies, **positive psychological interventions improved health behaviors.**

» [Learn more: doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsym.2022.107214](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsym.2022.107214)

To meet the vast need for mental health care and support in the United States and globally, Center Affiliate Scientist Vikram Patel and others are working to develop a system called “**Community Initiated Care**”, which would serve as a backbone for training lay persons to support the mental health and well-being of others in their communities.

» [Learn more: doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2022.11.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2022.11.008)

Former Center Co-Director Laura Kubzansky and Center affiliates Claudia Trudel-Fitzgerald, Peter James, and Francine Grodstein conducted a study on 159,255 racially diverse women and found that **higher optimism was associated with longer lifespan** and a greater likelihood of achieving exceptional longevity overall and across racial and ethnic groups.

» [Learn more: doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2021.02.011](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2021.02.011)

A study examining the risk of all-cause mortality assessed over eight years and conducted by Former Center Co-Director Laura Kubzansky and Center affiliates Tyler VanderWeele and Eric Kim found that **having a purpose can result in a longer lifespan.**

» [Learn more: doi.org/10.1093/gerona/glab169](https://doi.org/10.1093/gerona/glab169)

A systematic review of 41 studies on ideal cardiovascular health, conducted by former Center Co-Director Laura Kubzansky and former Research Fellow Anne-Josée Guimond, found that **higher social status is a consistent predictor of greater cardiovascular health** across the globe.

» [Learn more: doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2022.09.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2022.09.006)

Former Center Co-Director Laura Kubzansky, Former Center Research Associate Anne-Josée Guimond, and affiliate scientists reviewed data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing, which followed 4,006 adult participants aged 50 and older for 18 years and found that **having and sustaining multiple facets of psychological well-being is beneficial for cardiometabolic health**, and that effects may be additive.

» [Learn more: doi.org/10.1037/hea0001154](https://doi.org/10.1037/hea0001154)



LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS: THE CENTER’S EVOLUTION

The Center will build on the strong foundation laid over the last seven years, expanding its activities to encompass translational work and global research, with a particular focus on issues of equity. We will support activities that generate data in low- and middle-income countries. We will identify platforms that can translate research to facilitate action and engage stakeholders, who can collaborate with the Center to promote health and happiness. Issues of diversity, inclusiveness, and equity will constitute central principles, guiding the Center’s evolution going forward. The Center’s role will be even more critical in promoting positive health and happiness given current turmoil in the world.



LEE KUM SHEUNG
CENTER FOR
HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

HARVARD T.H. CHAN
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH