

**AGEING IN PLACE OR DISPLACED?
HONG KONGERS RETIRING
IN MAINLAND CHINA**

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Executive Summary

1. Hong Kong has one of the highest life expectancy in the world and a rapidly ageing population. Among all age groups in Hong Kong, the poverty rate of the elderly aged 65 and above is the highest.
2. The city's elderly population is slightly over one million, meaning that one out of seven Hong Kongers is aged 65 or above. The ratio is expected to rise to one in three by 2041.
3. Existing resources for elderly care in Hong Kong have fallen short of market demand. Thousands died every month while waiting for a place in a subsidised nursing home.
4. While most elderly prefer to age at home in their community, some have sought out nursing homes in Guangdong. The high cost of living in Hong Kong has also driven other retirees to relocate up north.
5. The Census and Statistics Department revealed that there were around 115,500 Hong Kong residents aged 60 and above residing in mainland China (HKRM), representing 8.6% of the total population in that age group in mid-2011.
6. The elderly who returned to their hometowns in mainland China are mostly first generation migrants to Hong Kong who have immediate family members living in their places of origin.
7. Close to 50% of the retired HKRM stayed in owner-occupied properties while 39.2% stayed in the rent-free premises of friends and relatives.
8. Guangdong province is by far the most popular place of residence for the HKRM. In 2011, 63.8% of them resided in Guangdong whereas 17% resided in Fujian and 7% in Shanghai.

9. Inflation, a stronger renminbi and mounting medical costs have made retirement life in mainland China more difficult for the HKRM. More retirees have been forced to move farther and farther north or to localities where the cost of living is lower.
10. To extend assistance to the HKRM, the Hong Kong government has taken positive steps to liberalise existing social assistance schemes by making them “portable.” It is also looking into the provision of care services to the HKRM across the border.
11. With advanced facilities and services, it is foreseeable that the number of elderly people from Hong Kong retiring in Guangdong will rise in the near future.