

Aged getting raw deal over medical care

THE president of the East Kowloon Jaycees, Joe Wong, yesterday hit out at the severe shortage in hospital beds, medical care centres and other services for the aged in Hongkong.

Speaking at a press conference, Mr Wong revealed that the East Kowloon Jaycees were launching a medical care project for the aged in order to focus attention on the issue and to look into the problems.

And he urged the government to improve the service, saying: "Ironically, medical treatment is one of the most important needs of the aged because most of them are weak and are apt to suffer from various diseases."

He said that the problem would become too serious to control in 30 years' time when the ratio of the old to the young would have increased substantially.

"It may be too late if we do not start planning now and improve the situation," he said.

The Jaycees, he said, were now conducting a survey in which about 400 aged people were being interviewed.

The four-month long survey, expected to be completed by August, will study and evaluate the available medical care facilities for the aged together with their medical problems, and then try to make recommendations to relieve the situation.

Mr Wong said a report on the findings of the survey would be sent to the government in September in the hope of focussing attention on the issue.

Explaining why medical care for the elderly was important, Mr Wong said they were usually neglected by the younger generation who were too busy making a living for themselves.

So they tended to become lonely and thought of themselves as being a burden on the family, which in turn put great pressure on them, Mr Wong said.

Psychologically, he said, old people tended to be despondent and easily gave in to despair.

They were afraid of death but seldom took care of their health, he said.

He said the aged were living a life of misery and urged that adequate medical service be provided to help relieve their problems.