

Sharp drop in Asians who feel healthy

- **Newly published Health Index shows % satisfied with health drop to new low**
- **Failure to exercise the main driver of declining health**
- **Previously identified ‘Generation O’ group is alive and (un)well – Asians continue to lack time & motivation to improve health**
- **Wellness apps and wearables are enablers for healthier habits**

HONG KONG, January 17, 2017 — The latest Sun Life Financial Asia Health Index shows that health satisfaction levels across Asia have dropped to a new low. Only 60% surveyed in Asia are happy with their overall health, down from 65% in 2015. Moreover, there are significant drops in the percentage of people with a positive view about physical health (down 7% pts) and mental health (down 8% pts). Echoing earlier warnings by the World Health Organization (WHO), the findings show growing concern about modern lifestyle-related illnesses with higher proportions of Asians saying that they lack the time and motivation to lead healthier lives.

Overall, with health satisfaction levels across Asia dropping to 60%, Hong Kong respondents were the most negative about their overall health with only 29% satisfied with their current overall health level (down from 44% last year).

Nearly a third of respondents (29%) say that they are less healthy than three years ago and cited a lack of exercise as the most frequently selected reason for the cause of the decline (36%). Over half (52%) around the Asia region do not regularly exercise. In terms of the types of exercise they’d like to do more of, the most frequent responses were running (54%), swimming (45%) and cycling (44%). Other most frequently cited unhealthy habits include sleeping less than 6 hours per night (31%) and regularly eating unhealthy food (28%).

No Time, No Motivation

In 2014, the Sun Life Financial Asia Health Index identified an emerging segment of the population in Asia called ‘Generation O’ – who were **o**verworked, **o**verweight and **o**verwhelmed. The latest research finds ‘Gen O’ continuing to struggle with many respondents attributing their failure to live a healthier life and a lack of personal motivation. The most frequently identified barriers to health were a lack of time due to work (50%) or due to family commitments (36%), lack of personal motivation (40%), and the distractions of modern life (35%).

“These results illustrate the growing concern that Asians have regarding their personal health and the struggle people face in prioritizing health and well-being in the face of modern life” said Kevin Strain, President and CEO, Sun Life Financial Asia. “Sun Life is committed to providing insurance and investment solutions that build stronger, healthier, more financially secure communities. The latest findings reaffirm the importance and necessity of promoting healthier lives in Asia.”

Technology – an enabler?

One element of modern life that is offering hope to Asians when it comes to their health is the emergence and proliferation of wellness apps and wearables. The survey showed that 42% of Asians use wellness apps or wearables, and those who use such technology tend to establish healthier habits and feel more positive about the state of their health. Among those who use wearables, 7-in-10 respondents feel more positive about their overall health, which is 10% higher than the general population.

Good Health in Year of Rooster

The news comes as millions of people across Asia celebrate the start of the Year of the Rooster. Those born in the Year of the Rooster are typically active and enjoy good health. “We hope that all Asians can take a lesson from those born in the Year of the Rooster when it comes to staying active and healthy” Mr. Strain said.

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About the Sun Life Financial Asia Health Index

The Sun Life Financial Asia Health Index is a periodic study of health trends in Asia that was launched in 2014. The research is based on the findings of an Ipsos survey conducted in August 2016. A sample of 3,986 Asians from 25 to 60 years of age and with middle class incomes was interviewed online from Mainland China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The survey questioned respondents on their attitudes towards healthy and active living, their health concerns for the future and expectations on access to healthcare.

About Sun Life Financial

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Sun Life Financial Inc. trades on the Toronto (TSX), New York (NYSE) and Philippine (PSE) stock exchanges under the ticker symbol SLF.

Note to Editors: All figures in Canadian dollars.

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