



Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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Early Return To Work Program (ERTW) – a Pilot Multidisciplinary Program to Enhance Rehabilitation for Patients with Injury On Duty

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Introduction

There are about 50,000 patients suffer from injury on duty (IOD) in Hong Kong each year. Many of them regularly attended Emergency Department and General Out-patient Clinics. Some of these patients develop chronic pain and functional disabilities, causing prolong absence from work and therefore economic burden to the health care system and the social workforce.

Objectives

In order to facilitate patients return to work earlier, we analyze the service gaps of present clinical service and subsequently develop innovative service model.

Methodology

Ten patients with IOD, ten doctors and two occupational therapists were interviewed by open ended questionnaire using qualitative method about present service for IOD patients. Service gaps were identified.

Result

For patients, they wanted early intervention such as occupational therapy so that they could regain working capacity earlier. Most patients felt lack of knowledge about IOD related issues and compensation procedures. They also preferred continuity of care by same clinicians so as to build mutual trustful relationship and confidence in the rehabilitation program. For doctors, they thought early interventions such as patient counselling, education could enhance positive attitude to the injury. Most doctors agreed that enhance continuity of care by same doctor can build up better rapport and clinical outcomes. For occupational therapists, they recalled most patients had inadequate knowledge about IOD related issues and were lack of support to develop job plan. They observed delay intervention and treatment would lead to patients' physically deconditioning and negative attitude towards return to work. They suggested structured and multidisciplinary service to shorten waiting time of rehabilitation and therefore reduce overall resources expenditure. To improve clinical service, an Early Return to Work Program team is established, consisting of designated doctors and occupational therapists. The multidisciplinary team agrees

and builds work plan on the same goal. Patients with IOD are referred by doctors of general out-patient clinics to occupational therapist of Ha Kwai Chung General Out-patient clinic for assessment and intervention. Patients commit to work rehabilitation training will be enrolled to the Early Return To Work Program. Selected patients will have work rehabilitation training in Occupational Therapy Department of Princess Margaret Hospital. Fixed doctors will follow up the patients regularly for the rehabilitation progress. Early Return To Work Program has been established since January 2016. It is expected to improve the rehabilitation of patients and facilitate their return to work earlier. If the result is promising, the program can be rolled out to other clinics.