Increasing bowel cancer screening access through a nurse screening clinic of Queen Mary Hospital: First experience in Hong Kong

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Keywords:
increased service access
bowel cancer screening
nurse clinic
first experience
Hong Kong

Introduction
Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the most common cancer in Hong Kong with 4563 new cases and 1903 deaths in 2012 1. Early diagnosis of bowel cancer can improve the treatment outcomes for patients. With increased incidence and public awareness of CRC, since June 2014, the Colorectal Specialist Nurse piloted the bowel cancer screening clinic to meet the service demand.

Objectives
This study aimed: (1) to describe the process and importance of establishing a nurse screening clinic for the benefit of patients; (2) to evaluate the outcomes of the clinic.

Methodology
A colorectal specialist nurse established the nurse screening clinic in Specialist out-patient department of QMH. Patients with positive faecal occult blood test were fast tracked to the nurse clinic. Comprehensive nursing assessment and required endoscopy examination would be provided. Detailed explanation will be given on the colonoscopy procedure with its risk and implications. Patients were assessed for fitness to undergo colonoscopy and health education was provided as well. After the endoscopy examination, patients were followed for results. Proper referrals and future screenings were organized. Telephone consultation was given for follow up support.

Result
From June 2014 to Jan 2015, 202 patients (94 male and 108 female) with the mean
age of 59.85(26-86) years attended the nurse clinic. 193 patients (95.54%) underwent the colonoscopy service. Of 193 patients, 52.33% (101) patients had abnormal pathologies. 5.70% (11) patients had cancer, 40.41% (78) patients had colonic or rectal polyps and 6.22% (12) patients had diverticula. Early colorectal surgery or chemotherapy or radiotherapy could then be provided promptly to these patients. Patients with colonic polyps had polypectomy performed, hence prevent them from threats of developing colorectal cancer in later years. Conclusion: With the increase in the number of bowel cancer screening through Queen Mary Hospital's nurse clinic, a large portion of patients are benefited by early screening access, and early detection of cancer and therapeutic intervention.