A new Physiotherapist–led Mobility Program to improve physical and mental status of patients in Psychogeriatric Ward

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Introduction
Psychogeriatric patients are prone to have deconditioning after prolonged hospitalization, and thus higher fall risk. However, not all of the patients receive physiotherapy during their hospital stays. Blanket referral system was endorsed and a new physiotherapist-led mobility program was initiated and commenced in psychogeriatric ward of Queen Mary Hospital in the second quarter of 2014. The tailor made mobilization exercises with optimal walking aids and endurance level would be identified for ward staff to carry out regularly.

Objectives
(1) To improve physical and mental functions of patients in psychogeriatric ward with the implementation of mobility program. (2) To incorporate regular mobilization exercise into daily routine of psychogeriatric patients.

Methodology
Screening of all patients' mobility status was done by physiotherapists shortly after their admission and throughout their hospital stays. Patients' optimal form of mobilization in terms of use of walking aids, level of assistance required, and exercise tolerance was identified, in order to facilitate ward staff to carry out exercise regimen daily. Average time of each mobilization exercise was 11 minutes. From March to December 2014, 44 patients with mean age of 75 were recruited in the program. Their average duration of receiving regular mobilization training was 1.5 months. Elderly Mobility Scale (EMS), Berg Balance Scale (BBS) and Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS) were used as the outcome measures of the program. The changes of these parameters were analyzed by Wilcoxon Signed Rank test.
**Result**

There were significantly enhanced ambulatory level (EMS from 13.74 to 16.14, $p<0.001$), improved balance performance (BBS from 36.40 to 40.93, $p<0.001$) and decreased depression level (GDS from 7.23 to 4.77, $p<0.005$) among the patients. The number of patients receiving physiotherapy after commencement of mobility program was increased by 85%. By receiving more physiotherapy training during hospital stay, physical function of psychogeriatric patients was improved with additional positive effect on mental status.