A ‘frontline friendly intelligent’ workload distribution system

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Introduction
In rehabilitation block of Tuen Mun Hospital, there are over 400 in-patient beds served by 6 teams of physiotherapists with a total of 16 physiotherapists and 6 supporting staffs. Daily workload distribution involving complicated procedure could be very time consuming with low efficiency and accuracy. A user friendly intelligent workload distribution system not only simplified the procedure but also improved the efficiency and accuracy. Besides, it promotes a more transparent workload distribution and positive working atmosphere.

Objectives
(1) To improve the efficiency and transparency of the workload distribution system; (2) To promote transparency in workload distribution and positive working atmosphere.

Methodology
Since May 2013, an electronic workload distribution system was implemented by using the Microsoft Excel software. With the preset formula in the system, operators simply input the number of working staff in each team with reference to the leave system, the duty of each team including physiotherapists and supporting staffs was shown automatically. The new system was operated by experienced staffs (physiotherapist I) for a trial of one month to ensure the smoothness of the system. Then, a representative of frontline staff in each team was empowered to use the electronic workload distribution system with the supervision of team heads. The frontline staffs rotated in monthly basis in compiling the daily duty list.

Result
When compared to the original system of workload distribution (do series of calculation using the hard-copy by an experienced physiotherapist), the new system
was more direct, efficient, accurate, flexible, user friendly and frontline friendly. The efficiency of compiling the daily duty list was increased by approximately 80% in time expenditure. Using the new system, the accuracy of even workload distribution in each team was greatly increased. And the workload distribution can be adjusted shortly in response to urgent change of the manpower such as staff suddenly call sick. Besides, no conflict among different clinical teams on the issues of workload allocation happened after the implementation of the new system. The advancement in electronic system enabled frontline staff to be committed in clinical duty arrangement. A new workload distribution system not only simplified the procedure but also improved the efficiency and accuracy of daily duty distribution. Besides, it promotes a more transparent workload distribution and “positive working atmosphere”.