Introduction
Patients with advanced cancer are confronted with challenging situations like unsurmountable physical distress, declining physical function and inadequate coping patterns leading to a debilitating quality of life. Although evidence proved the vital roles of physiotherapy in reliving symptoms, optimizing physical functions and enhancing quality of life in advanced cancer patients, late referral or not being referred to physiotherapy service in palliative care setting is still common. One reason may be lack of knowledge of both health disciplines and patients about rehabilitation or physiotherapy service and its benefits in the context of palliative care. Indeed, study showed that by identifying patients who can benefit from physiotherapy service early in admission can reduce both symptoms distress and subsequent physical disability.

Objectives
To describe the early physiotherapy service provided in acute palliative care ward in Tuen Mun Hospital. To evaluate how patients in acute palliative care ward experienced physiotherapy service and compare patients’ average hospital length of stay with other hospitals of similar setting.

Methodology
All patients in cancer palliative care ward were referred to physiotherapy for evaluation once admission regardless of their diagnosis and symptom presentations. Physiotherapists assess the patient’s conditions, physical needs, patients’ wishes develop individualized treatment plan with three main focuses: (1) Symptom management (e.g. breathlessness, pain control, lymphedema and fatigue etc.) (2) Physical re-conditioning (e.g. mobilization, ambulation training and fall risk education etc.) and (3) Empowerment to patients and their relatives for improving self-management skills. To evaluate our service, patients were invited to participate in qualitative, semi-structured and audio-recorded interview. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using a phenomenological approach. Data on average hospital length...
of stay (2013-2014) were captured from Clinical Data Analysis & Reporting System.

**Result**

There were 644 patients received physiotherapy service with a total of 6,348 attendances recorded from April 2013 to March 2014. The mean number of treatment session was 9.9. Fourteen patients were interviewed. Descriptive data was summarised as follows: (1) All patients reported overall positive experience towards physiotherapy intervention; (2) Positive experience perceived by patients in the aspects of mobility re-conditioning, symptomatic relief and psychosocial support; (3) Limited contact time between patients and physiotherapists was identified as an unsatisfactory aspect. A lower average length of stay (10.7 days) was recorded compared with other hospitals of similar setting (12.6 days). Conclusion: Physiotherapy is important in promoting patients’ well-being by enhancing mobility, relieving distressing symptoms and offering support. Early referral to physiotherapy is suggested to ensure early contact between patient and physiotherapist to prepare for the continuing relationship, early implementation of rehabilitation goals. Early physiotherapy service may possibly reduce length of stay although a more robust, randomized controlled trail is needed to ascertain the results.