Nurse Empowerment in Triage Clinic of KWC Ophthalmology Department
Rose CHAN PS (1), Robert LAM F (1), TAM CK (1), Can YUEN YF (1)
(1) KWC Ophthalmology Service

Introduction
Triage Clinic service was available at the Eye Centre of Caritas Medical Centre for screening all new case referrals and old cases with new active complaints. Doctors were responsible for screening, delivering patient care and carrying out treatment procedures if needed. The overwhelming workload created a great burden to the system and a barrier to the delivering quality patient service.

Objectives
We aim to introduce a new model of screening service at the Triage Clinic by empowering our senior nursing staff for the screening procedures

Methodology
A working group consisted of senior nurses and doctors was established to help the planning of the new triage service. A new triage guideline was set up regarding the screening criteria for urgent, semi-urgent, and routine appointment. Quota system was also introduced to help better service planning. Responsible nurses got familiarized with the guideline criteria and started the nurse-led Triage Clinic in October 2014. The referrals screened were later vetted by doctors to ensure appropriateness of appointment. Data on attendance and service utilization were also collected.

Result
Audit on the appropriateness of appointment, during the first month of service, showed that 2.1% and 1.8% referrals had upgraded appointment or downgraded appointment after doctors’ vetting respectively. At 3 months, only 1.09% and 1.42% referrals required to be upgraded or downgraded respectively. The number of days with overbooked urgent cases reduced markedly from 12 days in the first month to 4
days in the third month. This reflected continuous improvement and good quality of screening service by our nursing staff. Nurse empowerment in the triage service provides a good career development opportunity for senior nursing staff. It also allows doctors to concentrate on patient care so as to offer better quality service.