Reducing the Fall Risk of Elderly in Private Old Age Home through Walking Aids Screening Service and Fall Prevention Talk

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- fall prevention
- community physiotherapy
- walking aids screening

Introduction
Fall is a common problem in elderly and it creates huge burden for both hospital staff and care-givers. Properly prescribed and good-conditioned walking aids improve walking stability, confidence and safety of elderlies. However, it is observed that many elderlies do not recognize how to check and properly maintain their walking aids. Some fall injuries are actually attributed to the usage of incorrectly prescribed or even damaged walking aids. Community Physiotherapists can help reduce the fall risk of those elderlies living in private old age home (POAH) by initiating walking aids screening and fall prevention education, so as to enhance their knowledge and alertness on correct usage of walking aids and fall prevention.

Objectives
To reduce fall injuries and improve knowledge of walking aids maintenance of ambulatory elderlies in private old age home.

Methodology
Community physiotherapists collaborated with POAH staff to provide on-site fall prevention talk and walking aids screening. Before the intervention, data of fall including the number of Accident & Emergency Department (AED) admission, number of hospitalization and number of fracture in recent 3 months of POAH were collected. Questionnaires on walking aids maintenance and fall prevention were also collected before and after the educational talk, followed by screening and advice on the walking aids in use by a physiotherapist. The same data of fall were collected 3 months after the educational talk. The data were analyzed by SPSS using non-parametric tests.

Result
65 ambulatory elderlies from 5 private old age homes were recruited. 18 walking aids
were found to have excessively worn ferrules and 11 walking aids were found damaged that was beyond repair and needed replacement. The knowledge of fall prevention and walking aids maintenance significantly improved by 14.6% (p<0.05). The number of fracture, AED admission, hospitalization and fall reduced by 60%, 50%, 16% and 14% respectively in 3 months follow-up although statically insignificant due to small sample size. On-site walking aids screening service and fall prevention talk by community physiotherapist may reduce the number of falls in POAH. It also improves the knowledge and alertness of fall in institutionalized elderlies. (340)