Increasing service capacity and shortening healing time through patient engagement in chronic wound management

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Introduction
Advancing age and chronic disease often lead to immobility, poor blood flow to skin and improper functioning of the immune system that result in delay wound healing. The longer it takes for a wound to heal, the greater the impact on both patients and their caregivers, while leading to significant healthcare costs. The cost savings in term of increase nurse capacity and shorten wound healing time would be studied through patient engagement and empowerment program in chronic wound management.

Objectives
(1) Standardize patient and caregivers empowerment pathway (2) Apply level of care model (3) Shorten healing time (4) Increase service capacity

Methodology
Since August 2010, a self management empowerment program was implemented to engage patient and caregivers to participate actively in chronic wound management. They all went through a 5-stage empowerment program with close monitoring by nurses from community wound care team in the first month. After completion of training, attendance rate on wound care by community nurses and wound healing time was collected for comparison.

Result
In 2010-2011, the attendance per headcount ratio on wound care was 10.77 among 5,914 patients. The results were encouraging and the ratio decreased by 2.7-9.5% every year after. In year 2013-2014, the ratio further decreased to 9.49 among 6,508 patients. This has significantly increased the nursing capacity by 11.4% over the past
4 years and enabled the community nurses to engage in chronic disease management under manpower retrain situation. Further, this program is cost effective that the average healing time was shorten by 32% and 11.4% in pressure ulcer and chronic leg ulcer respectively.