West Kowloon General Out-Patient Clinic Accident & Emergency Department referral audit during the winter-surge period 2014-15

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Introduction
General Out-Patient Clinic (GOPC) physicians are important gatekeepers to our heavy-loaded Accident & Emergency Department (AED). During the winter there was a surge of attendances at various AED in Hong Kong. In Caritas Medical Centre (CMC) AED, the usual daily attendances would be around or below 400 but there were occasions exceeding 500 attendances in late January. The trend was likely to increase due to a surge of influenza cases spreading around the local community leading to a huge service pressure on the AED services this year.

Objectives
This audit evaluates the outcome and appropriateness of referrals to AED in the West Kowloon GOPC (WKGOPC) aiming at improving patient management and utilization of public resources at the winter-surge period.

Methodology
Records of patients referred to AED from October 2014 to February 2015 were reviewed and referral outcome retrieved from the Clinical Management System.
Inclusion criteria: (1) Patients attended WKGOPC consultation & referred to AED the same day of consultation (2) WKGOPC call-back referrals directly to AED for abnormal investigation results (3) Patients attended AED within the same day of referral by WKGOPC Exclusion criteria: (1) Disappeared or DAMA case at GOPC or AED (2) Patient attended another out-patient clinic session instead of AED after our referral

Result
Criteria for “appropriate” referrals include: (1) Hospital admission or observation-ward stay at AED (2) Investigation or consultation ordered on-site at AED (3) On-site treatment not available at GOPC (4) Discharge with medication(s) which is not available at GOPC formulary (5) Emergency Physician feedback during the winter surge period* * An additional criterion was added in collaboration with the CMC AED, the main AED serving the WKGOPC district, for feedback from the Emergency Physicians during the winter surge period in the month of January 2015 for any GOPC referrals in order to review our referral performance at the time when AED service demand was high. In a previous similar study at another GOPC within the same cluster, around 80% referrals were classified as “appropriate”. In this study we are analyzing the data as the project was still in progress. Further results & suggestions on service improvement would be further elaborated upon completion of the project by the end of February 2015.