An Audit on the Management of Hypertension in a General Out-patient Clinic
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Introduction
Hypertension (HT) is a prevalent and important chronic illness in Hong Kong. HT is known to be a major cause for cardiovascular diseases and cerebrovascular diseases. However, the blood pressure control remained suboptimal in primary care setting.

Objectives
1. To evaluate the quality of care for patients with hypertension in a general out-patient clinic
2. To identify the areas for enhancement in the process and outcome of management of hypertension
3. To implement changes to improve the quality of care
4. To assess the results after implementation of changes

Methodology
Modified audit protocol was used based on the protocol for hypertension management published by the Eli Lily National Clinical Audit Centre. In the first audit phase, records of representative sample were reviewed. The performance was compared with the set standards. Reasons for deficiencies of the care were identified. Enhancements including educational meeting for doctors and nurses, referring patients to Risk Assessment and Management Programme for risk assessment and patient education, and setting up of computer reminder and template for HT review were implemented. Second phase record reviews were performed 12 months after change implementation. Performance of the two phases was compared.

Result
345 and 338 cases were reviewed in the first and second audit phase respectively. In the first audit phase, only 4 out of 24 criteria reached the standard. After change implementation, the results showed marked improvement in most of the criteria (p<0.05) and 18 out of 24 criteria have attained the standard in the second audit phase.
The outcome criterion of optimal blood pressure control also showed significant improvement from 50.7% in the first audit phase to 76.3% in the second audit phase (p<0.0005). To conclude, hypertension is an important problem in the clinic. Audit is a practical and useful tool to identify areas of enhancement and improve the quality of care.