A collaboration fall prevention program in the neurology ward in Queen Mary Hospital

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Keywords:
Fall prevention
safe early mobilization
communication

Introduction
Fall is not an uncommon incidence among hospitalized patients. According to the in-patient post fall review in the 4th quarter of 2013, the top two common causes of fall were loss of balance and lower limb weakness which account for over 70% of the total fall incidence. Patients who were admitted to neurology wards usually have significant changes in their mobility status compared to premorbid. Although it is beneficial to facilitate mobilization at an early stage of rehabilitation, ward staff tended to be more conservative with patients’ mobility in ward to prevent fall especially when they were uncertain about their current physical ability.

Objectives
To prevent fall and enhance early mobilization of patients in medical neurology ward through better communication between physiotherapists and ward staff.

Methodology
The program was launched in March 2014. All the patients admitted to the ward were assessed by a physiotherapist, a signage indicating their mobility status including their transfer ability, sitting balance and walking ability was posted over the end of the plinth after the assessment. Walking aids were prescribed and loaned to the patients as indicated. Ward staff was trained on the transfer techniques, usage of different tools/devices to improve sitting stability and proper usage of walking aids in assisting patients to ambulate.

Result
There was an overall increasing trend in the number of patients that had been sat out of bed and could ambulate with or without walking aids, and with or without the assistance of ward staff after the implementation of the program. Fall rate was also
compared pre and post program. There was a 50% drop of fall rate within the half year after the program was launched. As a conclusion, mobility assessment done by physiotherapist with appropriate walking aids prescription in addition to the proper execution by ward staff, the patients in the neurology ward can mobilize in a safely and timely manner to avoid unnecessary immobilization during their hospital stay.