

Symposiums

S13.2

Cultural Diversity

14:30 Convention Hall B

Ethnic Minorities' Health in Hong Kong within its Cultural Diversity

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Introduction

Hong Kong is a developed city with excellent health indicators for the general population. However, many from the ethnic minority community which accounts for 6.4% of the total population, such as the South Asian community, are not receiving full benefits of the system as a result of different barriers in accessing healthcare service such as language and culture. Thus they tend to fall through the healthcare safety net that leads to ignorance of basic health issues. Furthermore there is a paucity of local study regarding health issues of this population, though high prevalence of obesity, hypertension and diabetes mellitus is reported in overseas studies amongst similar population.

Objectives

(1) To improve lifestyle, reduce the risk of chronic diseases particularly hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular disease among ethnic minorities; and (2) to empower ethnic minority community with health knowledge and raise their self-esteem, as health is a resource for everyday life.

Service Provision Methods

- (1) Extensive collaboration with various agencies focusing on health promotion, evaluation, interventions, disseminating of information on good health initiatives and practices.
- (2) Training people to engage in healthcare activities and mobilising the community to involve in all aspects of health activities through various channels of promotions and campaigns.
- (3) Healthcare professional with public health training are involved in provision of service.

Key Lessons

- (1) There are still many ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, who ignore their own health and the services available in Hong Kong.
- (2) Culturally sensitive health activities are important while approaching this community.
- (3) Collaboration and support from organisations, community groups, religious affiliations, healthcare professionals and the community themselves are vital.
- (4) Professional input is vital in evaluating and gaining trust from the community.

Discussion

The impact of sociocultural factors, ethnicity, and limited language proficiency on healthcare is increasingly important in the delivery of quality healthcare as it influences a patient's perspectives, values, beliefs, and behaviours regarding health and well-being. These factors give rise to variation in recognition of symptoms, thresholds for seeking care, comprehension of management strategies, expectations of care and adherence to preventive measures.

Culturally sensitive health intervention can enhance practice of healthy behaviour and health screening. Pure screening is insufficient. Screening must be followed-up by proper medical case management/treatment/referral and have a comprehensive reminder and recall system as an ongoing sustainable programme to reduce the incidence of chronic disease in this community.

Conclusion

Ethnic minorities are often undeterred by the generalised health service. There is a need to address the cultural need while proving healthcare service amongst this community and making Hong Kong a far more accepting society which embraces diversity to live up to its brand as a "World City".