



Service Priorities and Programmes
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From Eyes of Caregivers: Occupational Therapist-lead Early Intervention for Patients with Major Neurocognitive Disorder

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Introduction

Major Neurocognitive disorder (MND) is a major cause of dependence and disability at old age. It is a growing public health problem in Hong Kong for which early detection and intervention will help to delay disease progress and allow persons with MND to age in place with dignity.

Timely education and community support are crucial for caregivers to prepare for MND care. We enhance service delivery by providing a comprehensive MND caregiver educational program with community visit.

Objectives

This study is to evaluate the effectiveness of occupational therapist (OT)-lead MND caregiver educational program in enhancing MND care knowledge, relieving caregiver's burden and delivering continuity of care to community level.

Methodology

Caregivers of patients aged 65 or above with MoCA-5min at or below 2nd percentile cut-off in their corresponding age and education level, or presented with behavioral and psychological symptoms are recruited from AHNH OT outpatient setting from August to December 2017.

Apart from therapists' illustration of MND care, caregivers are encouraged to share their caring difficulties and coping strategies in small closed group format during five bi-weekly sessions. Community visit to Salvation Army Taiipo Multi-service Centre is arranged.

Zarit Burden interview and ten-question knowledge test, which was designed based on program content, were collected before and upon completion of program.

Demographic data, MoCA-5min, and questionnaire are collected for data analysis.

Result

24 caregivers of patients (female 66.7%, male 33.3%) with mean age 81.47.6 years (range: 65-93 years) were recruited. Mean score of MoCA-5min is 10.5 4.5 (range = 0-23).

Paired t- test showed that there was a significant reduction in Zarit Burden interview ($p < 0.05$) and improvement in ten-question dementia knowledge test ($p = 0.000$). 95.2 % of caregivers rated satisfactory or highly satisfactory with overall content of the program. 54.2% of patients were successfully referred for MND-related services and training in community level.

We observe increasing demand for cognitive services with quality. Our MND caregiver educational program not only allows caregivers to ventilate their internal feelings and receive mutual support, it also significantly enhance their knowledge and relieve burden efficiently. By having collaboration with community center, we hope to fill the service gap, improve continuity of care and promote aging in place.