



Service Priorities and Programmes
Electronic Presentations

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Be Active, Be fit for psychiatric patients in Community

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Introduction

In order to improve the physical health of psychiatric patients, physiotherapists in Shatin Hospital launched the physical wellness program in psychiatric day hospital to promote active healthy lifestyle. However, there were difficulties in monitoring their home exercise compliance. With the increase in popularity of activity trackers, we conducted a pilot trial to explore the feasibility of integrating activity trackers in psychiatric physical rehabilitation.

Objectives

- To explore the effectiveness of using activity tracker in promote home exercise compliance of psychiatric patients in community
- To explore any further improvement of their physical fitness with the tracker

Methodology

It was a pilot clinical trial. Patients in psychiatric day hospital that were referred to physical wellness program were allocated in either of 2 groups and participated same exercise training sessions. One group of patients wore activity tracker (ExAT) daily while another group without wearing tracker (Ex).

Primary outcome included the number of daily steps as measured by activity trackers. Secondary outcomes included muscle strength and body composition (body mass index and percentage of fat) of patients as well as their feedback. Time for taking outcomes was at Week 0 and week 8

Result

14 patients were recruited in the pilot trial (7 in ExAT and 7 in Ex). Demographic data on diagnosis, age and gender were similar. The result after 8 weeks programs showed that daily step numbers were increased gradually by 8.9 % in ExAT group while 6% increase in Ex group. Feedback from ExAT group had rating of 8/10 as they found activity trackers helped to increase self-compliance and motivation in home exercise through immediate feedback from tracker. For Ex group, their

motivation for exercise was mainly staff direct supervision and not for home exercise. For physical fitness outcome, the muscle strength of both groups was improved. However the group with activity trackers showed better control of body composition. It may be the result of their increase in walking exercise in community. As the patient numbers was small, more patients may be recruited for further study. The use of activity trackers can help therapists and patients in monitoring exercise compliance in community. It can also be a complementary accessory for facilitating psychiatric patients' motivation in exercises. Its application can be extended to other rehabilitation in community.