



## Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

**Convention ID:** 658

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### **Reduction in Use of Unauthorized Abbreviations**

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### **Keywords:**

Abbreviations

Unauthorized Abbreviations

Reduction

Clinical Safety

### **Introduction**

The use of unauthorized abbreviations is concerned for its inherent problem. It carries the risk of misinterpretations and misunderstanding. Once the abbreviation is misinterpreted, potential incident might be generated. Its risk is sometimes underestimated. In view of current situation that nurses maintain to include some unauthorized abbreviation in clinical documentation, the program of Reduction in Use of Unauthorized Abbreviation was initiated and commenced in January 2017.

### **Objectives**

- (1) To reduce and to strive to eliminate the use of unauthorized abbreviations in clinical documentation
- (2) To enhance staff appropriate perception and supportive attitude towards the use of authorized abbreviations
- (3) To cultivate and promote a safe culture for quality services and patient safety.

### **Methodology**

The program commenced with a pilot since January 2017. After the pilot, a workgroup was established in April 2017. Members included both clinical and community nurses. The program was divided into three phases. Phase I: Ward Report Book. Phase II: Patient Case Note. Phase III: Nursing Discharge Summary. For community nurses, Visiting Reports were referred. Regarding the implementation, it was summarized into the following 3 processes.

#### (1) Building Awareness

- To perform a pilot 'stock-taking' on the unauthorized abbreviations and their frequency
- To share and brief all workgroup members about the methodology after the pilot
- To start the department-wide 'stock-taking' by all members
- To consolidate and reflect the findings of the top 10 most frequently used unauthorized abbreviations

#### (2) Staff involvement and Engagement

- To give close guidance and support for each individual wards and units by representative members

- To present the results of 'stock-taking' of all involved wards and units weekly, for modelling and useful benchmarking
- (3) Sustaining the Reduction
- After a year implementation, all nurses would be given a quiz-like 'game' for them to have self-reflection. At the same time, the findings from the 'game' were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

### **Result**

All 5 clinical wards, Psychogeriatric Day Hospital, Adult Psychiatric Day Hospital and community nursing office in department of psychiatry were involved. Nurses' awareness, perception and attitude towards the use of authorized abbreviation were enhanced. The use of unauthorized abbreviations had been reducing in both the number of unauthorized abbreviations used and their frequency.

The program was proved effective to achieve reduction in use of unauthorized abbreviations. Last but not the least, it could not be happened without the support from the department and the enthusiastic involvement of all nurses.