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Development of an Occupational Therapy Clinical Pathway to Facilitate Recovery and Discharge of Elderly Patients in Extended care wards of Kowloon Hospital

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Introduction

Working in geriatric extended care wards, occupational therapists usually come across patients with wide range of medical conditions. Bell et. al. (2016) summarized in their study that the prevalence of geriatric syndromes of hospitalized patients referred to skilled nursing facility was 90%, of which 55% got ≥ 3 co-existing syndromes. Labella et. Al. (2011) highlighted the importance of improving the care by screening elderly patients for the presence of common geriatric syndromes. In order to provide a better quality of care, utilization of a clinical pathway that facilitating early screening and intervention of geriatric syndrome, would enhance rehabilitation outcomes in a cost-effective way. This paper reported the development of an OT clinical practice guide that facilitating recovery and discharge of elderly patients in extended care wards.

Objectives

1. To understand and learn the different geriatric syndromes, by review of evidence, which could lead to serious complication and highly impact on patients' recovery during hospitalization.
2. Develop a comprehensive OT clinical pathway for early identification and intervention of geriatric syndromes
3. Enhance clinical use of the pathway by in-services training, and then followed by further comprehensive research

Methodology

Literature search was conducted on the topic on geriatric symptoms of the elderly. Based on the literatures review, a clinical pathway was worked out referring to the occupational therapists' experience in daily clinical practice, and in aligns with the management of the medical clinical team.

Result

Result

The OT clinical practice pathway outlined the therapists' clinical tasks, assessment, intervention and precaution that beginning from the admission phase, progress during the rehabilitation phase to the final pre-discharge phase. The content was disease specific and also with emphasis on early screening and intervention of the common geriatric symptoms including, falls, pressure sores, delirium, depressive symptoms and functional decline. Liaison work to enhance multi-disciplinary input was also the focus of the clinical pathway.

Conclusion

After development and the related in-services training, the clinical pathway will be utilized in geriatric patients of extended wards in different specialties including ortho-spinal, RMD and medical geriatrics. The effectiveness of the clinical pathway will be evaluated by further comprehensive retrospective study in the 2nd stage of the project.