



Service Priorities and Programmes
Electronic Presentations

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Mitigation of Environmental Risk for In-Patient Suicide in General wards of Shatin Hospital

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Introduction

Patient call alarm system is commonly used in clinical areas to enable patients call for attention of caregivers. It is the device that the patient uses to say, "I need you" and considered to be a tool to decrease patient anxiety and hopefully improve patient safety. For more than 25 years since opening of Shatin Hospital, pull string type call bell had been used in patient toilet which was considered as potential environmental risk factor for patient committing suicide by ligature strangulation.

Patient Safety and Risk Management Department, Quality and Safety Division, HAHO regard suicide, while an inpatient (including home leave), as an sentinel event, that is death from suicide of inpatient committed any time after in-patient admission and before discharge, including home leave. Healthcare professions have the accountability to ensure patient safety by mitigation of existing risk imposed by pull sting call bell in patients' toilets.

Objectives

This project aimed to mitigate the environmental risk for patient suicide by replacement of pull string type call bells with wireless alarm system in all patients' toilets of Shatin Hospital.

Methodology

Environmental scanning and stocktaking of pull string type call bells installed in all patient toilet cubicles was initiated in Jan 2017. Then follow with sourcing of funding for procurement of wireless call bell system that will emit audible and visible alarm signal when being activated for the replacement in May 2017. At the same time, there was a close liaison between Hospital Planning & Facility Management Division and different clinical departments for installation plan such as requirement of additional power sockets. Besides, detail changeover plan was further discussed with ward managers to confirm appropriate and convenient location of waterproof push button which should be readily noticeable for summoning assistance in patients' toilets. Finally, staff education and product demonstration were arranged to arouse staff attention, alertness and usage on the new product.

Result

100% of the pull string type call bells were eliminated in all clinical areas of Shatin Hospital. All healthcare professionals are satisfactory with newly installed wireless call bell system. There is no incident of patient suicide by ligature strangulation reported for the period of Jan 2017 until present.