

An Innovative Enhancing Primary Care Collaborative Program - Optometry Service in GOPC

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Introduction:

Eye symptoms are commonly presented at general out-patient clinics (GOPCs). Due to a lack of diagnostic equipment at the GOPCs, referral for specialist assessment is often needed. This practice burdens the secondary ophthalmic care system and delays patient management.

Objectives:

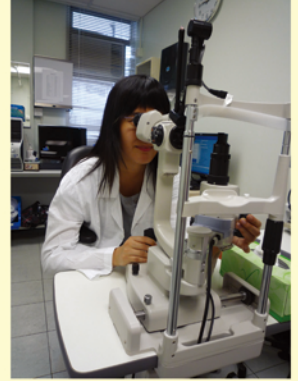
- ❖ Enhance primary ophthalmic care
- ❖ Reduce unnecessary referrals
- ❖ Evaluate the feasibility of incorporating optometry service into primary care

Method:

An optometrist-led service was set up at Tsan Yuk Hospital in September 2010. Patients were referred from six GOPCs of Hong Kong West Cluster. Apart from those requiring urgent ophthalmological intervention, any patient presenting with eye symptoms could be referred to the optometry service. Feedback from the optometrist was provided to the referring physicians.

The services included:

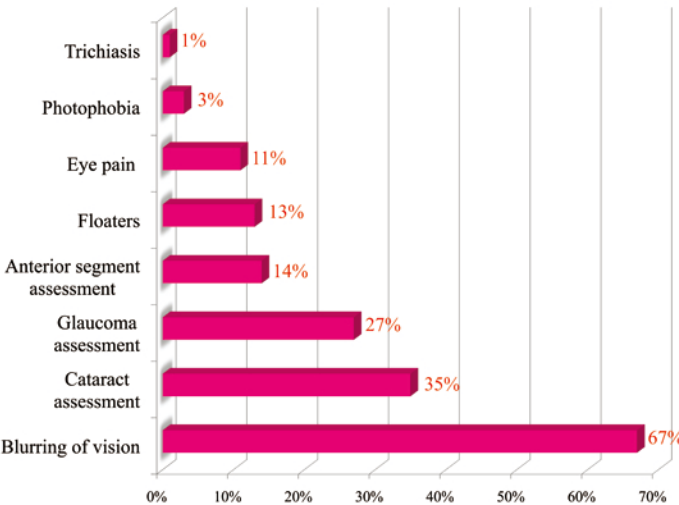
- ❖ Measurement of vision
- ❖ Anterior and posterior segment assessment by slit-lamp biomicroscopy
- ❖ Intraocular pressure measurement
- ❖ Retinal imaging through dilated pupils



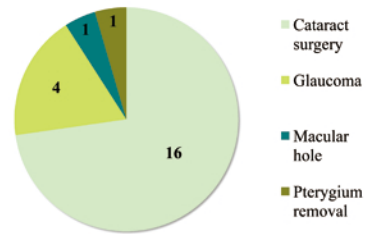
Results:

- ❖ Between September 2010 and January 2011, 176 patients were seen in the optometry service.
- ❖ The age of patients ranged from 18 to 90 years.
- ❖ The most common presenting symptom was blurred vision (n=118/176, 67%). The majority of these patients had uncorrected refractive error (n=96/118, 81%) and their vision could be improved with spectacles.
- ❖ Cataract assessment was the second most common reason for attendance (n=61/176, 35%). Only 15% of those patients who attended for cataract assessment required specialist evaluation for surgery while the remaining was monitored in the GOPCs.
- ❖ Apart from cataract, other indications for specialist referral included glaucoma (n=4) and macular hole (n=1).
- ❖ Overall, 22 out of the 176 patients (12.5%) were referred for specialist attention.

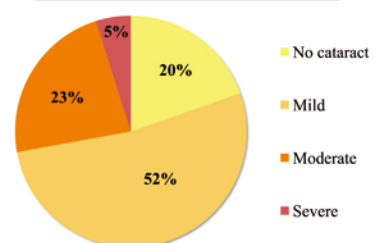
Reasons for optometry clinic attendance (n=176)



Indications for ophthalmologist referral (n=12)



Cataract assessment outcome (n=61)



Discussion:

The majority of patients presenting with eye symptoms could be managed in the primary care setting. With the collaboration with optometrists, family physicians could enhance their diagnostic ability and reassure some patients whilst reducing the number of referrals to secondary care.