



**Service Priorities and Programmes**  
**Electronic Presentations**

**Convention ID:** 103

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**CONTINUING EDUCATION OF HEALTH CARE ASSISTANTS HELPED  
PROMOTING QUALITY PATIENT CARE**

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**Keywords:**

Effect of continuing education for Health Care Assistants

**Introduction**

Health Care Assistants play a vital role in the health care industry by helping patients with different areas of daily functioning and management of medical conditions. To align with People First Culture advocated by HA, front line nursing manpower was partially relieved by the Health Care Assistants. In our hospital, most health care assistants work under the supervision of nurses. In Hong Kong, the training preparation of Health Care Assistants was done by various training organizations. Some of them were trained by the hospital itself while some were trained by some outsider training organizations. With the differences in training received, the attitude and work output by the Health Care Assistants were not consistent. Besides, after the basic training, they seldom receive continuing education which applies to nurses, doctors and other allied health professionals of the hospital.

**Objectives**

In order to keep up to standard the care provided to the patients by this group of staff, the Surgical and the Orthopedic & Private Ward Departments initiated a refresher training program for the Health Care Assistants in their departments. The program was co-organized by the Central Nursing Division, Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This study was done retrospectively to assess the effectiveness of the training program organized.

**Methodology**

In January 2012, totally 3 half day training sessions were arranged for a total of 63 HCAs. Most of them were nominated to attend the program officially. The refresher program focused on the following essential patient care topics: Manual Handling Operation; Incontinence Pressure Ulcer Care; Prevention of Patient Fall & Use of Safety Device; Bed Bath & Hair Washing; Work Place Violence; Communication Skills & Customer Service and Infection Control. To follow up with the participants' performances when they went back to their work place, a set of post-training follow up questionnaires were sent to their supervisors to review the effect of the training program.

**Result**

In the training, pre-test and post-test were done to assess the difference in knowledge and skills before and after the training. The results reviewed that there were marked

improvements in the post-test. Most of the post-program follow up questionnaires were completed by the Ward Managers who would directly monitor the participants' performances. The results showed that the Ward Managers generally agreed that the materials refreshed were relevant to the participants' daily work and were very useful. They commonly agreed that after the training, the participants' clinical knowledge and skills were enhanced. The percentage of improvements enhanced by the program ranged from 10% to 100%. Most of the essential skills refreshed were mostly applied on the job. By refreshing the essential care skills, the participants demonstrated enhanced confidence. There was learning culture built up in the work place as well and the results showed improvements of patient care and reduced complaints by patients. The common feedbacks showed that the program worth the investment because they agreed that the training produced benefits such as enhanced staff morale; hospital image and staff/patients/relatives relationships. The Health Care Assistants appreciated joining the refresher training program, feeling that they were being recognized as members of the hospital's multi-disciplinary team and were more willing and active in participating in the quality care delivery process. As a conclusion, the refresher program benefited all parties, including the hospital, ward, staff, patients and relatives and ultimately enhanced the patient care quality. References: Annual Report, 2011, Hospital Authority, Hong Kong