



Service Priorities and Programmes
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Submitting author: Dr Polly LAU

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Broadening the knowledge and sharpening the skills on patient handling devices: a cornerstone to prevent occupational health risks in patient transport

Lau PMY(1), Poon MWY(1), Ho GMC(2), Chan ACM(3), Chau RMW(2)

(1) Physiotherapy Department, Queen Elizabeth Hospital (2) Physiotherapy Department, Kowloon Hospital (3) Physiotherapy Department, Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital

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Introduction

The demand of patient transport to Physiotherapy Department for treatment and training has been escalating and there was over 32,000 no. of patient transport last year. Poorly-maintained wheelchairs and stretchers, particularly those with faulty wheels and bearings, may impose undue biomechanical stress and cause repetitive strain injury to our patient transport staff during frequent manoeuvring of these devices. Therefore, to protect our staff against occupational health risks and ensure safe patient transport, using good-condition patient handling devices is utmost important. In view of this, the Physiotherapy Departments of Kowloon Central Cluster organised "Patient Transport Device: Maintenance and Repair Workshops" for staff, aiming at improving knowledge and practical skills on maintenance and repair of wheelchairs and stretchers.

Objectives

To evaluate staff's competency on maintenance and repair of patient transport devices after training To evaluate staff's satisfaction level on the training workshop

Methodology

Comprehensive training workshops on maintenance of patient handling devices were delivered to KCC PT staff in the period of September 2012 to November 2012. The contents included safety inspection, problem identification, hands-on repair of faulty parts such as bearings of wheels, loose braking systems, impaired leg rest etc. Staff's competence on maintenance and repair of patient transport devices was evaluated before and after training. Overall satisfactions and comments were collected.

Result

More than 50% of the 96 participants were supporting staff. Average working experience was 4.1 years (ranged 0.25-30 years). Significant improvement in

knowledge level was noted after training ($p < 0.001$). Majority of staff members expressed positive feedback, i.e. agree the contents of the workshops were usefulness (94.8%) and having better understanding of the captioned (97.4%). All participants passed the practical tests and gained competency in safety inspection, maintenance and repair for these devices. Conclusion “工欲善其事，必先利其器” - having good and reliable tools is prerequisite to the success of task execution like patient transport by wheelchairs and stretchers. Apart from educating the staff on safety patient transfers skill and control of environmental hazards, enhancing their knowledge and skills in good maintenance and repair of patient handling devices can definitely protect staff safety and health at work.