



Service Priorities and Programmes
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An outcome evaluation of a comprehensive, multidisciplinary rehabilitation program for breast cancer patients in Kwong Wah Hospital

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Introduction

Cancer rehabilitation has played an important role in the cancer care pathway. After breast cancer surgery, potential problems may occur which would lower the quality of life such as numbness of chest wall and upper arm, limitation of shoulder range of movement, scarring, altered body image, altered in sexuality and marital relationships and resulting in loss of self-esteem. A comprehensive multidisciplinary seamless rehabilitation program is designed and implemented for breast cancer patients in Kwong Wah Hospital (KWH). This rehabilitation program is designed and led by breast care nurses (BCN) and physiotherapists team.

Objectives

This program aims at timely rehabilitation after surgery with patients arranged to be follow up in the clinics run by BCNs and physiotherapists. BCNs play a role in the postoperative wound and drain management, providing psychological support, identifying individual problems and educating shoulder mobilization exercise and self-care. Roles of physiotherapists include evaluation of muscle strength, shoulder range of movement, scar problem. Treatment can then be offered accordingly such as massage, laser therapy, soft tissue mobilization and exercise therapy. The streamlined clinical pathway aims to identify patients' needs during rehabilitation, to have a fast track access to physiotherapist care, to provide a contact point to patients and hopefully to help patients return to normal life early.

Methodology

Patients were invited to complete the questionnaires at postoperative 1 month. Outcome measures were categorized as: (1) Expectancy Outcome, (2) Chinese Social Adjustment Scale, (3) Chinese Health Questionnaire score, (4) Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale, (5) Satisfaction Survey.

Result

From December 2009 to May 2011, 164 questionnaires were analyzed. Results showed: (1) the impact of surgical outcome on appearance, social relationship,

retaining normalization and perceived husband's support showed positive expectations, (2) decreased in social functioning on body image, enjoyment and sexuality, (3) patient experienced low level of psychological morbidity including anxiety and depression, (4) the satisfaction with the health care team was high. A good rehabilitation program with multidisciplinary team collaboration can complement the continuity of care and in a proactive approach can have a positive outcome and minimize complications.