



Service Priorities and Programmes
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Enhancing Client Engagement in Medication Treatment

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Introduction

Evidence shows that antipsychotics may prevent psychotic relapses, thereby reducing length of hospital stay, preventing rehospitalization and promoting psychosocial reintegration (Miyamoto, et al., 2003). Relapse rates have been shown to be five times higher in clients with schizophrenia who are non-adherent with medication compared with adherent clients, resulting in a significant social and economic burden (Robinson et al, 1999). Therefore, it is of paramount importance to enhance clients' engagement in medication treatment so that the clients can be helped to minimize the chance of relapse and rehospitalization.

Objectives

(1) To examine clients' knowledge and attitude towards anti-psychotic medication; (2) To solicit the opinions of clients towards the provision of drug education by healthcare professionals for empowering clients to improve their medication adherence; (3) To identify factors that facilitate or hinder clients' engagement in medication treatment

Methodology

A self-administered questionnaire was employed to elicit the attitude and knowledge of the respondents regarding anti-psychotic medication. Subjects were (1) clients with principal diagnosis of schizophrenia; (2) aged 18-65 years residing in in-patient psychiatric settings of Kwai Chung Hospital. Use of instruments were: (1) Chinese version of Drug Attitude Inventory (DAI-30) (Hogan, Awad, & Eastwood, 1983); (2) a self-developed questionnaire designed to elicit the experiences and knowledge of the client participants regarding anti-psychotic medication, and to identify factors that facilitate or hinder clients' engagement in medication treatment. Afterwards, factor analysis was conducted and recommendations were given for enhancing existing nursing services.

Result

358 adult in-patients were recruited for completing the hospital-wide survey. The response rate was 75.4%. The opinions and ideas were summarised to reflect the various factors facilitating or hindering clients in engaging in medication treatment and

the possible options perceived by the clients to be effective in enhancing medication adherence. Significant findings were as follows: respondents who had experienced side-effects of medication tended to have experiences of not taking medication as prescribed ($r=0.202$, $p=0.001$); respondents with positive subjective responses in DAI tended to be more readily agree that medication information provided by healthcare professionals was useful ($r=0.238$, $p=0.002$); respondents who perceived that medication information was useful tended to be more readily replied that they would take medication persistently as prescribed after receiving information of medication ($r=0.215$, $p=0.000$). The study helped to provide concrete data on the complexity of client's adherence behaviour and recommendations for enhancing existing nursing services to improve clients' engagement in medication treatment.