



Service Priorities and Programmes
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**The Effectiveness of Family Medicine Specialist Clinic (Orthopedics) in
Enhancing the Gate Keeping Role in Primary Care Setting**

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Introduction

The KWC Orthopedic Family Medicine Specialist Clinic (FMSC Ortho) has been set up since 2008. Priority 3 referrals from PMH Orthopedic SOPD triaged to this clinic were assessed by Family Physician. It aims at strengthening the gate keeping role in primary care setting and help to alleviate the prolonged waiting time for SOPD. Prominent features of FMSC Ortho include: (1) Screening of referrals by Family Physician (2) Enhanced consultation time (3) Direct access to special investigations (4) Support for some minor procedures e.g. steroid injection for trigger finger and ganglion aspiration etc

Objectives

To study the effectiveness of FMSC Ortho in (1) Managing non-urgent orthopedic referrals (2) Enhancing the gate keeping in primary care setting

Methodology

All priority 3 referrals recruited from PMH Orthopedic SOPD from June 2010 to January 2013 were followed up and analyzed. Outcome measurements include the proportion of patient requiring special investigations or minor procedures, the discharge rate back to the primary care and the proportion requiring referral to secondary care

Result

During the study period, 1275 referrals were seen in FMSC Ortho, with 28.5% from private; 19.5% from AED; 23.3% from GOPD; 25.4% from other SOPD and 3.2% from others. The top 3 reasons of referral were low back pain of different causes, osteoarthritis of knee and different kinds of repetitive strain injury. 3.4% of them required special investigations (3.2% need NCV and 0.2% indicated for MRI). 2.5% of them had minor procedure done (1% had aspiration of ganglion and 1.5% had steroid injection of trigger finger). 1137 cases i.e. 89% have been closed case after an average of 1.5 visits to FMSC Ortho. 64.6% were discharged back to primary care (58.8% to GOPD, 5% required no follow up and 0.5% to private). Only 11.8% need

referral to secondary care for further management. In conclusion, FMSC Ortho is effective in enhancing the gate keeping role in primary care setting. With the enhancement of consultation time, access to some special investigations and technical support for some minor procedures, majority of non-urgent orthopedic referrals can be managed effectively by Family Physician in primary care setting.