



Service Priorities and Programmes
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Quality Improvement project on staff safety for the transportation of discharged patients from wards

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Introduction

Occupational safety and health (OSH) has become an utmost concern for healthcare workers since 2007. Since the hospital beds were gradually replaced by electric beds in wards, staff injuries from using electric beds for intra-hospital transportation of patients were brought to the alert by managers in YCH. To prevent further incidents and to recommend measures to foster safety at work, a quality improvement project to minimize the usage of electric beds for the transportation of discharge patients was initiated. Collaborative support between nursing and central supporting department was sought

Objectives

To identify the frequency on the use of electric beds for transporting patients from wards to NEATS catchment area. (2) To recommend strategies to eliminate staff injuries due to transportation of patients with electric beds in YCH.

Methodology

(1) Observation study on the use of electric beds for the transportation of discharged patient from ward to NEATS catchment area was carried out in October 2012. (2) Nurses' opinion on intra-hospital patient transport were collected from general wards. (3) Monthly statistical reports on the use of stretchers for patient transportation for NEATS cases were analyzed.

Result

Use of electric beds for patient transport was common in the observation study; but stretchers usage was not seen. The response rate of nurses' opinion survey was 70.3%. Reasons of not using stretchers for patient transport were identified, such as resource constraints, staffs' concern in sustaining injury from frequent manual handling of patients and time management. The results were reported and discussed with the concerned nurse managers. To rectify the resource problem, more stretchers for intra-hospital transport were put in use. The concept of OSH in patient transportation among all staff was promoted among management meetings and

hospital Q&S forum. Staff were reminded to use stretchers for transporting discharged patients. Furthermore, the Automatic Dispatching System (ADS) was modified that the equipment orders for all NEATS patient portering were defaulted as "DCSS Stretcher" , so as to improve the logistics in patient transportation process. The number of cases using electric beds would be recorded and monitored on a periodical basis. With the support from top management and cooperation of the concerned departments, the usage of stretchers for transporting discharged patients was greatly increased from 0% to 98%. In March 2013, an on site observation reviewed that all the discharged patients were transported to NEATS catchment's area by means of DCSS stretchers or wheelchairs. The result showed that measures stated could be effectively facilitated the use of stretcher. Furthermore, there was no reported staff injury due to transportation of patients with electric beds in the past five months. This was a typical project that demonstrated an encouraging result with the collaboration among different departments in YCH. Continuous quality improvement in the operational process would not be achieved without concrete evidence and support from top management. The project would be extended to other means of patient transportation in the hospital in the long run. The use of electric beds for patient transport would be further rationalized to ensure staff safety at work.