



Service Priorities and Programmes
Electronic Presentations

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Promoting musculoskeletal health of KWC staff through in-house Ergonomics Consultation Service offered by Occupational Therapist (a 3-year review)

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Introduction

Musculoskeletal related injuries and illnesses (MSK) is a well-known issue affecting staff's morale and productivity. An in-house, user friendly Ergonomics Consultation Service (ECS) was established in KWC since 2009. Frontline participation was emphasized in both hazards identification and formulation of improvement actions. Continual support from various field experts was coordinated by Occupational Therapist specialized in Ergonomics which was shown to be a practicable yet effective working model.

Objectives

The review aims at concluding good learning points from the 3-years experiences gained in KWC

Methodology

Retrospective analysis of request nature, intervention strategies and outcomes

Result

A total of 88 requests from work unit were received in this 3-year period, which contributed to improve the musculoskeletal health of more than 2400 staff. The greatest demand came from clinical units (60 % of total requests). 189 ergonomic-related issues needed to be followed up in which most of them were associated with tools / equipment design (23.3 %), work practices / procedures (21.7 %), workstation design (20.6 %) and job-specific ergonomic training (20.1 %). Service demands increased markedly in the aspects of workstation station design (increase 75%) and improvement of tool/ instrument (increase 25%). With the active participation of both frontlines and senior management, preferred design features for shroff office in general out-patient clinics as well as physician's consultation stations were concluded and incorporated in renovation works. A systematic way to explore users' preference and feedback (protocol on usability evaluation) on tool/ instrument design was developed and published in an international conference (Applied Ergonomics & Human Factors 2010: ISBN 978-1-4398-3503-6). Apart from the

hardware involved in these requests, workers' behaviors were identified to be a crucial element needed to be monitored. Individualized behavioral coaching program was specially designed for selected units which in terms, facilitating the thereafter full scale implementation of "Work Safe Behavior" as required in "WHO certified International Safe Workplace Program (ISWP)" whereas Kowloon West Cluster was the first (healthcare related) workplace in Hong Kong obtained this internationally recognized designation. Worker's active participation with empowerment by experts in the field is the core of Ergonomics Consultation Service (ECS). It is not only an effective means to reduce musculoskeletal risks but is also regarded as one of the major contributors to worker's musculoskeletal health. Good learning points were concluded and well illustrated with various local examples. Occupational Therapist specialized in Ergonomics could take a major role in coordinating the efforts of various stake holders in developing effective yet practicable improvement strategies.