



Service Priorities and Programmes
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Cost effectiveness of telephone reminders in reducing non-attendance rate of MRI appointments

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Introduction

Non-attendance of MRI appointments causes a waste of resources. Some previous studies showed that telephone reminders effectively reduced hospital appointments non-attendance rate.

Objectives

To evaluate the cost-effectiveness of telephone reminders in reducing local MRI non-attendance rate.

Methodology

A total of 1253 MRI appointments were scheduled during two observation periods each of five weeks (5-12-2011 to 7-1-2012, 1-10-2012 to 3-11-2012) and an intervention period of five weeks (3-12-2012 to 5-1-2013). During the intervention period, patients were reminded of their appointments by a clerk through telephone one to two days before. Cancellations were filled in by other appointments. Data for attendance rates were collected. Comparison of default rates between the observation and intervention periods was assessed by chi-squared test. Cost of an MRI appointment was calculated based on salary of one clerk, one patient care assistant, one registered nurse, two radiographers, and two associate consultant radiologists (On-cost is excluded). Cost of intervention was calculated based on salary of a clerk.

Result

Non-attendance rates during the first and second observation periods were 14.1% and 11.6% respectively. Non-attendance rate during the intervention period was 4.5%, which was 9.6% lower than the first observation period (95%CI = 5.7%-13.5%, $p < 0.01$) and 7.1% lower than the second observation period (95%CI = 3.5%-10.7%, $p < 0.01$). As a result of the reduction in non-attendance rate by telephone reminders, \$422254HKD worth of manpower resources was saved per year. In conclusion, telephone reminders significantly reduced non-attendance rate of MRI appointments and was cost-effective.