Convention ID: 932
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Service Evaluation for Outpatients with Mild Cognitive Impairment and Early Dementia
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Keywords:
Service Evaluation
Mild Cognitive Impairment

Introduction

Occupational Therapy outpatients with mild cognitive impairment and early dementia are rapidly increasing; the referral numbers has increased from 365 referrals in 2009 to more than 800 referrals in 2012. These patients are receiving different forms of intervention including assessment, computer cognitive training and cognitive training group. The direct patient feedback through focus groups implementation can help in identifying gaps in the service and potential for improvement in addition to those findings from numbers oriented statistical exercise.

Objectives

The objectives in using focus groups in service evaluation is to collect direct patient feedback to service delivery, identifying gaps of service and elicit suggestions from our patients in methods for service improvement. The approach is more geared towards active involvement of our clients in the early phase of service planning process, so the needs of our patients can also be seriously considered and discussed.

Methodology

Four patient and caregiver groups were implemented with a total of 30 participants are included; the target participants include patients and caregivers that are receiving Occupational Therapy service for mild cognitive impairment and early dementia. Clients and caregivers are contacted with aims and method of implementation of the focus group were explained, verbal consent are sought from them before implementation. Since all the clients have been attending Occupational Therapy, the Occupational Therapy Department was chosen as an appropriate venue for inducing trust and reliability, non threatening and convenient for access. Prompting questions were used to encourage non-threatening and open discussion, and the participants are encouraged to express their ideas freely and discuss with other participants as they wished. The responses are recorded and categorized under major headings, some important quotes of ideas were listed out for better representation of the feedback from our clients, and the information is summarized for drawing up of conclusion and action plan.

Result

Most of the clients think that the registration process is smooth and the indication for room location is clear enough, and the staff is helpful. For the computer training, most patient think that it is advance technology and relevant training to their memory problems, but the environment is sometimes too noisy for them to concentrate, and the repeated practice can be boring sometimes. Some of them expressed the difficulties in setting up similar training at home, and it is time consuming and costly to come for the training. For the cognitive training group, most of them think that it can enhance better social engagement, they are happy during the group and the training provided is very useful but there are difficulties for them to apply the strategies for enhancing memory. An action plan for improvement was set up for further improvement of the service.