Service Priorities and Programmes

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Age-friendly city in elderly rehabilitation – how far did we go? An experience in Tai Po district

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Introduction

In the past ten years, the rate of the injury involved in road traffic accidents increased from 10.1% to 16.1% whereas 22.3% of them involved at traffic-light controlled pedestrian crossings. Owing to the hospital-related inactivity on physical functioning, hospitalized elderly generally walks at speeds below the community-dwelling elderly. Therefore, the condition of the pedestrian crossings had an obvious impact for those previous social participants to reintegrate to the community.

Objectives

(1) To find out the requisite walking speed in maintaining the community independence in Tai Po district (2) To assess the walking speeds of the premorbid active patients in Tai Po hospital, and (3) To evaluate the discrepancy in limitation.

Methodology

A quantitative cross-sectional study was conducted. Eighty-eight sets of traffic light-controlled pedestrian crossings which were essential for the elderly to go market, bus stop, park, restaurant and shopping mall had been measured. The data collection was performed between 7:00 am and 10:00 am. On the other hand, forty-four patients aged over 60 years old were recruited from general medical ward. All participants could walk without assistance. Each subject was instructed to walk with comfortable and fast walking speed in a ten-meter pathway.

Result

According to the measurement, the minimum walking speed of the pedestrians should be more than 0.8 m/s to safely cross the traffic-light controlled pedestrian crossings. Sixteen male and twenty-eight female patients with mean age of 78.6 years old had participated in the measurement of walking speeds. Their comfortable and fast walking speeds were statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$). Eight (18.2%) and nineteen (43.2%) of them can walk faster than 0.8m/s in their comfortable and fast walking speeds respectively.