



**Service Priorities and Programmes**  
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**Enhanced clinical handover for cross-ward patient transfer – safe and quality continuity of physiotherapy management**

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**Introduction**

Continuity of patient care is essential standard for achieving planned healthcare outcomes, ensuring patient safety and clinical risks containment. Clinical handover refers to the transfer of professional responsibility and accountability for some or all aspects of care for a patient, or group of patients, to another person or professional group on a temporary or permanent basis (ACHS EQUiP 5 Hong Kong Guide). During hospital accreditation, Clinical Handover Standards in Physiotherapy Department (2012) is developed and implemented in Kowloon Hospital to address specifically the required standard.

**Objectives**

(1) To achieve safe and quality continuity of physiotherapy management for the cross-ward transferred patients in specific rehabilitation wards; (2) To evaluate effectiveness and compliance of the enhanced clinical handover system.

**Methodology**

(1) Formulate enhanced clinical handover system by retrospective patient data analysis, needs and improvement identification, peer review and management endorsement; (2) Conduct staff training and engagement briefings; (3) Perform clinical audit on clinical handover records from October to December 2013.

**Result**

(1) The enhanced system consisted of standards including Patient Information, Transfer Information, Clinical Information & Management, and Physiotherapy Management Plan. They were documented in a standard Handover Record Form and to be completed by physiotherapists from the Source Ward and Receiving Ward. (2) There were totally 25 patients transferred to the Receiving Ward, including 10 medical (40%), 3 geriatric orthopaedic (12%), 11 neurological (44%) and 1 others (4%) by case-mix. They were 10 male patients (Mean age = 69.6 yr. old) and 15 female patients (Mean age = 80.1 yr. old). The data compliance was 100% (Patient Information), 96% (Transfer Information), 92% (Clinical Information & Management) and 92% (Physiotherapy Management Plan) respectively. The response time in

handover process ranged from 0 Working Day (76%) to 1 Working Day (24%). The enhanced clinical handover system was systematic and reliable to facilitate effective and efficient patient transfer. Handover information was legibly recorded and was specific to the clinical situation. Patient risk, if any, was documented for physiotherapist to observe and follow up. Staff roles and responsibilities were explicitly defined to strengthen communication and accountability. This system served as a practice reference for other clinical settings in the department.