



Service Priorities and Programmes
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A 3-year outcome of POH Podiatry same day appointment as a one-stop service for NTW Diabetes Centre diabetic complication screening patients

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Introduction

Podiatry plays an important role in the prevention and treatment of diabetic foot complications. Patients' referrals from the New Territories West (NTW) Diabetes Center Diabetic Complication Screening (DMCS) to POH Podiatry (POD) are prioritized with all other referrals received. Due to the limited staffing of podiatrists, long waiting time towards patient's first appointment is anticipated. The identified foot problems may not be the patient's primary complaint, and these patients tend to default their appointments. In view of this, podiatry Same Day Appointment (SDA) was established in 2011 for DMCS patients.

Objectives

To provide convenience to patient To initiate treatment immediately To reduce waiting time to first appointment To reduce default rate

Methodology

Baseline data (first appointment waiting time and default rate) was taken in 2011 2Q. Since the establishment of SDA, periods of 3-month data (2011 4Q, 2012 2Q, 2013 2Q) were taken each year. When a podiatric referral was necessary, patients were informed about their treatment need, the consultation fee, and first appointment waiting time. Patients have a free will to opt for SDA. The achievement of the above objectives were reviewed and evaluated for continuous improvement.

Result

The average referral rate of DMCS patient to podiatry in all four study periods was 8.4%, with a male to female ratio of approximately 3:2. Prior to the implementation of SDA, the average waiting time was 19.5 weeks and the default rate was 25.7%. The waiting time of the 3 study periods with SDA were significantly shortened to 5.6 weeks, 4.1 weeks, and 3.8 weeks. Default rates were reduced to 12.2%, 20.9%, and 13.9%

respectively; while a 'zero' default rate was achieved for SDA patients. 47%, 37%, and 50% of referred patients during the study periods chose NOT to be seen in the same day, due to time constraint, cost, or no podiatrists were available. POH Podiatry Same Day Appointment as a one-stop service for NTW Diabetes Centre DMCS patients provided patient convenience, early initiation of treatment, reduce waiting time and default rate. Furthermore, patients' understanding and compliance of diabetic foot health and foot care are strengthened as advices are given twice by 2 different staffs in the same day.