



## Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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### **Ear irrigation training and accreditation programme at General Outpatient Clinic**

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#### **Keywords:**

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#### **Introduction**

Impacted ear wax is commonly encountered in primary care. It impairs hearing and causes great discomfort. Ear irrigation is an effective procedure to remove ear wax. Among the five general outpatient clinics. In Hong Kong West Cluster, 'excessive ear wax' was documented as presenting problem in over 700 consultations with 400 ear irrigations being performed in 2013. It was usually performed by doctors during consultation or by nurses who acquired the skill from colleagues. It was time consuming, taking up to 20 minutes which is equivalent to time needed for four consultations. In order to enhance the quality and safety of the procedure and avoid loss of consultation time, a structured training and accreditation programme for nursing staff has been implemented in October 2013.

#### **Objectives**

1. To enhance competency of nursing staff in performing ear irrigation  
2. To ensure safety and effectiveness of ear irrigation

#### **Methodology**

The programme includes theoretical training session, knowledge test, practical sessions, clinical competency assessment and regular review. Trainers include family doctors who have passed family medicine professional examination, advanced practising nurses and nurses accredited by training committee of the department. Trainees will attend a seminar on theory and technique followed by an oral quiz. Upon passing the oral quiz, trainees will observe three ear irrigations demonstrated by trainer and perform ten under supervision. They can practice independently after passing a competency assessment. A refresher programme will be held biannually.

#### **Result**

Nine nurses among 3 GOPCs in Southern District have joined the programme. From October 2013 to January 2014, a total of 53 ear irrigations have been performed on 41 patients. The mean age was 74 years old (ranging from 3 to 94). Male to female ratio was 2:3. Bilateral ear irrigation was performed in 12 patients and single ear in 29 patients. Complete removal of ear wax was achieved in 40 irrigations (78%) at first attempt. Seven (14%) resulted in partial removal with no repeated irrigation needed. Two failed requiring repeated irrigations among which one had complete removal and

one partial removal. One 3-year-old child with bilateral ear wax failed irrigation requiring specialist referral. No complication has been encountered. This programme has preliminarily shown to be effective in improving the efficiency and standard of ear irrigation at GOPC.