



**Service Priorities and Programmes**  
**Electronic Presentations**

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**Advanced Inhaler Technique Counseling by Dispensers**

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**Introduction**

Studies showed that patient who has improper inhaler technique can lead to poor disease management. Patients, therefore, are recommended to receive comprehensive counselling of inhaler techniques. In OLMH, inhaler technique counselling at out-patient setting for new patients or patients with poor adherence was mainly handled by Pharmacists, Resident Pharmacists or Senior Dispensers. With ever-evolving inhaled devices, Dispensers, who were trained on the uses of inhaled devices in their academic program, are good candidates to provide independent counseling under regular skill consolidation in order to optimize the utilization of skill-mix.

**Objectives**

(1) To explore the feasibility of role expansion of Dispensers. (2) To ensure the consistency of inhaler technique counselling.

**Methodology**

Dispensers received comprehensive, structural in-house training under Advanced Inhaler Technique Counseling Certification Program first piloted in OLMH in May 2013. Dispensers took up to 2 weeks to go through training materials (including product information) of 6 different inhaled therapy devices (24 drug items) available in OLMH (e.g. Turbuhaler, Handihaler, Accuhaler, etc.). Demonstration available as visual aid can be accessed by Dispensers for further knowledge and technique consolidation. Pharmacist/Resident Pharmacist were assigned to Dispensers as tutors for consultation if needed. Dispensers were then assessed for competency through proper demonstration and counseling of all inhaler devices. After passing simulated demonstration and counselling, they provided comprehensive counseling of inhaled devices to patients on at least two occasions under the observation of pharmacists. Upon passing these assessments, Certified Dispensers performed independent, detailed inhaler technique counseling for cases referred by Medical, Nursing and Pharmacy Staff with backup support of pharmacists as needed. Certification will be repeated every 2 years. Satisfaction survey on the program was conducted to Certified Dispensers.

**Result**

From 14th May to 21st Nov 2013, 14 (100%) Dispensers completed trainings and assessments. Certified Dispensers provided 49 independent, quality inhaler technique counselling sessions to patients from 28th Nov 2013 to 29th Jan 2014, among whom only 1 (2%) case was referred to pharmacist. Certified Dispensers were satisfied with this program (disagree-agree response scales: 8.3/10), which could enhance their knowledge on the uses of different inhaled devices (8.8/10) and skills on patient counselling on proper inhaler technique (8.5/10). With ever-evolving inhaled devices, inhaler technique counseling by Certified Dispensers with the support of pharmacists can be an effective service model with better utilization of skill-mix.