



Service Priorities and Programmes
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A new effective Primary Care Physiotherapy Knee Program for Osteoarthritis Knee patients emphasizing early intervention and home-based self-management

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Introduction

Introduction: Osteoarthritis Knee (OA Knee) is a common chronic disease that causes pain and disability. The prevalence of OA Knee is approximately 30% in those over 65 years old and is increasing with age. It will become a substantial public health problem and medical demand, unless early prevention and intervention are introduced.

Objectives

Objectives: 1. To provide early physiotherapy intervention for patients of OA Knee in primary care setting in HKEC General Outpatient Clinics. 2. To equip patients with self-management technique to prevent further deterioration or complications. 3. To decrease demand on secondary health care service.

Methodology

Methodology: A new physiotherapy knee program was provided with 3 sessions of group education of anatomy, pathophysiology, disease progression of OA knee, risk factors modification, weight reduction, joint protection and ergonomic advice. Home-based treatment with knee strengthening and stretching exercises, pain management with physical therapy, including ice or heat therapy were emphasized. Correct home self-management and good exercise compliance were highlighted and ensured for all patients. The program was implemented in a patient-centered approach with assessment, additional sessions of advice, and physiotherapy treatment, such as electrotherapy, manual therapy given according to patient's needs.

Result

Result: From March to August 2013, 571 patients referring from HKEC GOPCs attended the program. The average waiting period for the first appointment was about 8 weeks. The mean physiotherapy sessions was 4.4. There were significant improvements in pain level(Numeric Pain Rating Scale decreased from 4.1 to 1.8, $p < 0.001$), functional level(Oxford Knee Score increased from 28.5 to 34.9, $p < 0.001$), and the patient's subjective improvement was 64%. Telephone follow-up of 60 patients attended in March 2013 by convenient sampling showed that 98% and 80%

of patients continued home knee exercises on discharge and 6-month post-discharge respectively. Comparing the number of OA Knee referrals from GOPCs to Physiotherapy Outpatient Departments of HKEC in 2013(after launching the program in June 2012) with that of 2011(before launching the program), it was decreased by 40%. Conclusion: The new Primary Care Physiotherapy Knee Program in HKEC GOPCs provided early education and intervention to OA knee patients and was effective in relieving pain, improving functional status and decreasing the demand on secondary health care service.