



## Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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### **Can We Enhance The Appropriateness of Drugs Used on Elderly Patients Served by an Outreach Team?**

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#### **Introduction**

With aging population, many elders in Hong Kong are either institutionalized or remained living in their own home to age. Despite Government's policy to promote community care and "ageing in place", Hong Kong has a higher institutionalisation rate (nearly 7% aged 65 or above) when compared with Japan, Taiwan and Singapore. Elderly living in long term care facilities are more vulnerable and frail because of higher degree of physical, functional and cognitive dependency. They are commonly prescribed more medications than those living in the community. Study reported that polypharmacy was a significant contributory risk factor for potentially inappropriate prescribing which can lead to adverse drug reactions, drug interactions, prescribing cascade and higher costs.

#### **Objectives**

A. To determine the prevalence of potentially inappropriate medications (PIMs) in elders served by a HA outreach team by using the 2012 American Geriatrics Society Beers (AGS) Criteria. B. To investigate the knowledge and acceptance of Explicit Criteria among prescribers of the team.

#### **Methodology**

A one week survey on prevalence of PIMs was conducted in August 2014. All prescriptions from a Community Geriatric Assessment Team were screened for PIMs by a pharmacist using the latest 2012 AGS criteria, independent of clinical diagnosis. A questionnaire survey was conducted to investigate the prescribing doctors' knowledge and acceptance of various Explicit Criteria .

#### **Result**

Out of the total 232 prescriptions evaluated in the survey, 55 (i.e. 23.7%) were found to have at least one PIM. The most common PIMs were antihistamines (hydroxyzine 19.7% and chlorpheniramine 16.9%) and alpha adrenoceptor blockers (terazosin

19.7% and prazocin 12.7%). Of the 10 doctors who participated in the questionnaire survey, 50% and 60% agreed that Hong Kong should adopt the Explicit Criteria and derive its own list of PIMs respectively. Over 60% of doctors agreed that Explicit Criteria were good tools to complement professional clinical judgment. This survey confirmed that PIMs are commonly prescribed to elderly residing in long term care facilities and incorporation of Explicit Criteria into computerized prescribing system should help reduce occurrences of PIMs. Hence, doctors and pharmacists working in the field of Geriatrics should formulate Explicit Criteria unique to Hong Kong with the aim of enhancing appropriateness of drugs used on all elders.