



Service Priorities and Programmes

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Control of Influenza Outbreak in Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (RCHE) of Kwai Tsing District

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Introduction

Residential care facilities in particular RCHEs are considered to be high-risk environments for influenza due to communal living arrangements, the continual close proximity of residents and high prevalence of chronic medical conditions. There is a potential role for antiviral drugs in the management of influenza outbreaks in RCHEs, as an adjunct to all other control measures. Incomplete or patchy use is likely to reduce the effectiveness of the intervention and increase the risk of the influenza virus developing resistance to the antiviral drug. In August 2015, PMH Community Nursing Service (CNS) and Community Geriatric Assessment Service (CGAS) partnered with the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) piloting an enhancement strategy of mass antiviral prophylaxis as a control measure for influenza outbreaks in RCHEs of Kwai Tsing district.

Objectives

(1) To give antiviral prophylaxis for uninfected residents as soon as is practicable and appropriate after an outbreak is declared. (2) To control influenza outbreaks in RCHEs. (3) To reduce hospitalizations.

Methodology

PMH CNS and CGAS formed a working group to study the incidences of influenza outbreaks in RCHEs of Kwai Tsing during the first 6 months of 2015. The study revealed that Tamiflu offered effective prophylaxis against Influenza A. However, only a certain percentage of residents were provided with Tamiflu prophylaxis after an outbreak occurred in their lodging. In collaboration with the CHP, the working group (1) formulated an algorithm of planned outbreak response actions (2) worked out an effective communication system (3) designed a form to collate residents' medical condition during outbreaks (4) conducted briefings to stakeholders especially RCHEs (5) piloted the enhancement strategy in November 2015 and monitor the situation.

Result

From Nov 2015 to Jan 2016, there was one influenza outbreak in RCHE of Kwai Tsing. Swift actions required for managing outbreak had been taken. A higher percentage of residents were provided with Tamiflu prophylaxis. Conclusion: The project is ongoing. Collaborative efforts of all stakeholders to forge ahead in preventing, managing and controlling outbreaks of Influenza are likely led to increased efficiency and yielding sustainable long-term success in healthcare.