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**Evaluation study on Carer Empowerment Programme:
A carer-oriented approach programme to enhance carers' confidence and readiness**

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Introduction

Carers often feel lack of confidence and readiness to take care of patient at home on discharge. This often results in delayed discharge, repeated admissions or dismiss the idea of caring at home. (Bauer et al., 2009; Shyuet al., 2007). Carer Empowerment Programme (CEP) is developed to empower carers' confidence and readiness in patient-care at home. The programme encourages active learning experience on caring skills using a mannequin for repetitive practice. It also enhances knowledge on caring and community resources with interactive use of tablet computers. A resource folder with videos is also distributed to participants on completion of programme.

Objectives

To evaluate the effectiveness of Carer Empowerment Programme in improving carers' confidence level on providing care and readiness to take patient home on discharge.

Methodology

Carers with caring need were invited to join the 3 hour CEP group by Occupational Therapist in Shatin Hospital held in a bi-weekly basis. To evaluate on the effectiveness of programme, a questionnaire with 10-point Likert scale reflecting carers' competence was designed to measure their change in confidence level in (1) caring techniques, (2) utilization of transportation, (3) accessing community resources and (4) arranging leisure activities before and after the session. Outcome survey was also conducted to measure the change in carers' perception on readiness to take patient home. Another 6-month telephone follow-up evaluation was

also conducted to measure the sustainability on effect of CEP.

Result

27 groups were run with a total of 243 patientsâ€™ carers attended. Results from Likert-scale questionnaires have shown statistically significant increase in median score in all four areas (p-value < 0.001), corresponding to a significant increase in caring confidence. Ratings from outcome survey reveal that all contents of CEP were scored with highest frequencies on â€œStrongly Agreeâ€ and â€œAgreeâ€ (87.1% in caring technique, 80.8% in community resources, 78.3% in utilization of transportation, 72.1% in leisure activities).

Telephone follow-up was conducted to participants six months after the programme. 152 patientâ€™s carers attended CEP before July 2016. 97 participants were successfully interviewed. Among the patients who still required assistance in self-care, 96.3% of their carers were applying the learnt caring skills and found the techniques useful. 94.8% agreed that the content of CEP was enough for taking care of patient. Overall 93.8% of the patients were able to be continuously taken care at home.