



Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

Convention ID: 223

Submitting author: Dr Clare Yuet Lan CHAO

Post title: Senior Physiotherapist, Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Reintegrating a Person with Disability into the Community: An Experiences Sharing on Provision of Wheelchair from Physiotherapy Perspectives

CHAO CYL(1), CHAU DKW(1), Chan ACM(1), CHAU RMW(2), LEUNG KKL(2), POON MWY(3), LAU PMY(1)(4)

(1)Physiotherapy Department, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, (2)Physiotherapy Department, Kowloon Hospital, (3)Physiotherapy Department, Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital, (4)Physiotherapy Department, Kowloon Central Cluster

Keywords:

Physiotherapy

Wheelchair prescription

Disability

Technological advancement

Community re-integration

Safety

Introduction

Access to wheelchairs is a vital component for people who have mobility impairment and walking limitation for successful re-integration into the community. Selection of an appropriate wheelchair for a safe use relies on an accurate user needs assessment and training. In the past, only minority of those in need have access to a wheelchair due to the high cost and difficulties to access the public facilities. Since December 2008, the Government of Hong Kong has implemented a series of enhancement measures on “Barrier-free Facilities of Public Transport Services” and others for encouraging elderly and persons with disabilities to re-integrate into the community. Recent technological advancement also allowed wheelchair to be designed in low-cost, light-weight and small-in-size that enable users with different needs.

Objectives

To evaluate the referral profile, patient demographics, medical diagnosis categories, and the types of wheelchair prescribed on the wheelchair provision service.

Methodology

This was a retrospective review study. All referrals on wheelchair prescription and training in the Physiotherapy Departments of Kowloon Central Cluster from Jan 2013 to Dec 2016 were retrieved for analysis. Upon receiving the aforementioned referrals, physiotherapists underwent the following procedures including (i) collect relevant information for clinical decision making, (ii) physical examination, (iii) environmental visits, (iv) selection of appropriate wheelchair, and (v) wheelchair training, maintenance, and education. Recommendation on home modification, re-housing and financial assistance such as application of Samaritan Fund would be followed in

selected cases.

Result

92 wheelchair prescription referrals were received from Jan 13 to Dec 16 (9 in 2013 vs. 50 in 2016), of which 60% of the referred cases were of aged <65 years old. Majority of them suffered from musculoskeletal disorders (62%), followed by neurological conditions (28%), and medical and cardiorespiratory diseases (10%). Needs assessment were conducted for all cases. 81 wheelchairs were prescribed of which 25% of them were powered wheelchair, 35% self-propelled manual wheelchair and 40% transit wheelchair. Re-housing recommendations were issued in 46 cases and with funding applications in 26 cases.

With the advancement in wheelchair technology, improved environmental measures and enhanced general public acceptances, the demand for wheelchair prescription and training has been on the rising trend. An accurate user needs assessment is essential for selecting an appropriate wheelchair. The critical steps include referral, physical assessment, prescription, ordering/funding application, fitting and adjustment, user training, follow-up maintenance and repairs, and education on safety-related matters. Appropriate provision of a suitable wheelchair facilitates people with disabilities to re-integrate into the community which potentially enhances the psychosocial well-beings and quality-of-life outcomes.