



Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

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Early Return To Work Program (ERTW) – The first Multidisciplinary Program to Enhance Rehabilitation for Patients with Injury On Duty in General Out-patient Clinics (GOPC)

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Introduction

There are about 50,000 patients suffer from injury on duty (IOD) in Hong Kong each year. Some of these patients develop chronic pain, causing prolonged absence from work. From July 2015 to June 2016, there were 436 IOD patients with repeated attendance in 23 KWC GOPCs (i.e. more than 40 GOPC visits), which accounted for over 26,000 doctor consultations in a year.

Early Return to Work (ERTW) Program has been established, based on service gaps identified in a pilot study, at Ha Kwai Chung (HKC) GOPC since January 2016.

Objectives

- (1) Offer patient centered and continuous care to IOD patients;
- (2) Shorten the waiting time for rehabilitation service;
- (3) Enhance collaboration among Family Medicine (FM) doctors, occupational therapists and physiotherapists, at both GOPC & hospital settings;
- (4) Facilitate earlier return to work of IOD patients;
- (5) Decrease number of doctor consultation for each patient and reduce the GOPC quota utilization.

Methodology

Patients who suffer from injuries at work and have regular attendance at 5 GOPCs in Kwai Tsing district would be recruited into the program after triaged by occupational therapist. Patients are regularly followed up by designated FM doctors. We collaborate with PMH Occupational Therapy Department for early work hardening program. Physiotherapy is offered to enhance rehabilitation. Regular case conference is conducted, so that FM doctors and allied health teams can discuss the management plan for specific patients.

Result

Result:

From January to December 2016, 45 patients were recruited into the program. 37 patients have completed the program. 96% showed high satisfaction (score ≥ 8 out of 10) with the program. 37.8% (14 out of 37) patients returned to previous work or changed to suitable jobs compared with 17.5% (7 out of 40) before the establishment of ERTW program ($p=0.045$). The number of IOD patients with prolonged sick leaves in 5 GOPCs of Kwai-Tsing district decreased from 60 in 2015 to 50 in 2016 while that in 5 GOPCs of Shamshuipo district (without ERTW program) increased from 43 in 2015 to 55 in 2016. For the 37 patients who have completed the ERTW program, the total number of doctor consultation sessions decreased by 71.4% (from 796 to 227 sessions) compared with that if they received usual care in GOPCs.

Conclusion:

Early Return to Work Program is a patient centered multidisciplinary rehabilitation program with high patient's satisfaction. It facilitates earlier return to work of IOD patients. The number of doctor consultation for each patient decreased and reduce the GOPC quota utilization. The results show the effectiveness of ERTW program and the program can be rolled out to other clusters.