



Service Priorities and Programmes Electronic Presentations

Convention ID: 976

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Elderly patients with common mental disorder have the best response under the care of Primary Healthcare team

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Keywords:

Common mental disorders

Elderly

Primary Healthcare

Introduction

The elderly constitute a large proportion of the visitors to primary health care clinics. Mental disorders in the elderly are relatively common, with a 12-month prevalence among older adults in the community ranging from 8.54% to 26.4%. Unfortunately, many mental disorders in the elderly are unrecognized, untreated, and associated with poor health outcomes. Elderly persons with psychiatric disorders are even less likely to be seen in mental health settings than younger patients. However, they are more likely to see their Primary Healthcare Physician regularly.

Objectives

To find out which age group patient with common mental disorders has the greatest improvement after the treatment under a primary health care multidisciplinary team

Methodology

We retrospectively analyzed all the Integrated Mental Health Program (IMHP) patients under two HKWC designated GOPCs from June 2013 to December 2015. The entry (pre-) PHQ-9 and GAD-7 scores were compared with the exit (post-) scores correspondingly.

Result

During June 2013 to December 2015, there were 917 patients recruited into IMHP. The female to male ratio was about 3:1. The medium of age group was 55-59 years old.

When comparing the post- vs pre- PHQ-9 scores: the average difference was dropped by 4.56 for all patients, with 33% dropped in the symptom scores. The age group that had the biggest drop was 70-74 years old, i.e. -6.54, with 53% dropped. When comparing the post- vs pre- GAD-7 scores: the average difference was dropped by 4.31 for all patients, with 34% dropped in the symptom scores. The age group that had the biggest improvement was also 70-74 years old, i.e. dropped by 5.73, with 51% dropped.

When comparing the pre- and post- scores, the elderly patients had the greatest improvement in the symptom scores compared with younger age groups. In consequence, integrating mental health treatment into primary healthcare could be a viable way of closing the treatment gap and ensuring that people get the mental healthcare they need.