

Community Care Network for Discharged Frail Elderly

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Introduction

In view of the frequent re-admission of frail elderly, their inadequacy in management of disease and poor social support, a community-based care project—HKEC Volunteer Support Network for the Elderly was launched with the collaboration of the hospitals of HKEC and six distinctive NGOs in elderly service in Hong Kong East. Volunteers were trained and matched to provide regular visits and phone contacts to the frail elders in the community.

Purpose of the Project

1. To strengthen the support network of the elderly in need.
2. To enhance the awareness of elderly on home safety and healthy living.
3. To reduce re-admission through improving the elders' capacity in managing their disease.

Material & Methods

Self-report questionnaires are designed and delivered to both volunteers and elderly served to evaluate the service outcome.

Results

As more than 80% of the targeted elders suffered from two or more diseases. By rendering regular home visits, the volunteers provided basic medical knowledge and health screening to the frail elders. The volunteers also advocated the concept of self-management to them. There were 99% of the elders reported that the program enhanced their awareness towards the health condition and the importance of maintaining a healthy life style. This helps to reduce unnecessary re-admission in long run.

Besides, over 80% of the targeted elders are living alone or living with spouse. All of them feedback that the concern visits could reduce their sense of loneliness. Meanwhile, all the volunteers reported that the program achieved the goal of enhancing the awareness of elderly on healthy living.

Conclusions

The development of the community based volunteers is found effective in building a supportive network for the elderly. The collaborative effort by Hospital Authority and NGOs also demonstrates the better utilization of existing community resources.

