

# **Impact of the voluntary service provided to the elderly on health related quality of life (HRQoL), unplanned admission rate, frequency of admission and length of hospitalization**

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## **Introduction:**

Discharged elderly patients with poor social support are prone to have lower physical, mental, and emotional health. Health Resources Centre Voluntary Service was developed in the Prince of Wales Hospital in Hong Kong in order to support the discharged elderly who lived alone or daytime alone by helping them to cope with the community after being discharged from the hospital through volunteers' participation.

## **Purpose of the Project:**

(1) To evaluate the effect of Prince of Wales Hospital Discharged Elderly Programme (PWHDEP) on patients' HRQoL, unplanned admission rate, frequency of admission and length of hospitalization. (2) To evaluate the elderly patients' satisfaction on PWHDEP.

## **Materials and Methods:**

Elderly aged 65 or above, with poor social supports in Shatin District who have just been discharged from the Prince of Wales Hospital were recruited from April 2008 to May 2009. PWHDEP was arranged and implemented with volunteers' regular social support for 6 months. Outcome measures included: (1) Short form 12 (SF12) health related quality of life questionnaire, (2) unplanned admission, (3) frequency of admission, (4) length of hospitalization before and after the study, and (5) satisfaction questionnaire.

## **Results:**

A total of 72 elderly were recruited with one withdrew owing to personal reasons. Six-month after the PWHDEP, unplanned admission rate (reduced 7%) and average length of hospitalization were lowered (from 6.68 days to 5.56 days respectively) while SF12 was improved significantly (PCS increased from 28.03 to 32.25; MCS increased from 44.35 to 48.2) with majority of elderly (90.6%) were satisfied with the services provided.

**Conclusions:**

PWHDEP was effective in improving the quality of life of the discharged elderly both physically and mentally. Further, the elderly were satisfied with the services provided by the volunteers. In view of hospital cost, the PWHDEP showed a trend in reducing both admission rate and length of hospitalization for the elderly and it warrants a further cost-effective analysis of the PWHDEP in the future.