

Telephone Nursing Service for Hospital Discharged Frail Elderly - 15 Months Experience

Choi SMA, Chow S W, Shum B, Ng S, Kwan A, Cheng E, Cheung S Y, Chow S M, Ng T, Chong L, Yeung N, Yuen A, Tsang E, Pau M, Chan F, Luk J, Chiu P
Geriatric Health Nurse Unit, Hong Kong West Community Geriatric Assessment Team, TWGHs Fung Yiu King Hospital.

Introduction:

Due to the global recognition of telecommunication via telephone in health care support to the community dwelling elderly, Fung Yiu Hospital (FYKH) has launched a Protocol Driven Telephone Nursing Service Program in 2001.

Purposes of the Project:

- 1) To enhance continuity of care for the community frail elderly after discharge from hospital.
- 2) To early detect of health deterioration and complication, and facilitating prompt interventions especially during the transitional period.

Method:

A '3-month pre and post intervention comparison design' was employed. Geriatric Health Nurses (GHNs) initiated four telephone calls to the recruited clients within the 1st month post discharge; at the same time, the recruited clients could also call in as needed. Interventions included health education, health monitoring, counseling, and triaging clients to various health care services by referring / liaison the client to the appropriate health service provider. The outcome indicators were the number of A&E attendance, unplanned admission, and result of Clients' Satisfaction Survey. The collected data were analyzed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and tested by the Student's *t* distribution.

Results:

Within the 15 months, 632 subjects were recruited after discharge from FYKH (22% from own homes, and 78% from Aged Homes). GHNs have initiated 2010 regular telephone follow-ups. It was found that 50% of the clients' problems were solved through telephone advice. Four hundred and nine clients (65% of the recruited subjects) had significant reduction in A&E attendance (↓41%) and unplanned admissions (↓47%) within the first 3-month post intervention period. Ninety-one percent of the clients / carers were satisfied with the service.

Conclusion:

With proper set up and appropriate supporting services, Telephone Nursing Service can be an efficient and effective way to enhance the clients' continuity of care in the community. The program was effective in reducing unnecessary A&E attendance and unplanned admission, and was very much recommended by the clients. Future direction should include consolidation strategies to benefit for more with less resource by confining to focus group and expanding the service to cover a wider population base.

Operational Flowchart:

Telephone Nursing Service for Discharged Frail Elderly From FYKH

