



14th SINGAPORE PUBLIC HEALTH & OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE CONFERENCE

15-16 October 2019 · Equarius Hotel

PREVENTIVE HEALTH IN A CHANGING WORLD

NOVEL MAPPING OF HEALTHCARE REFERRAL PROCESSES IN THE SINGAPORE COMMUNITY CARE SECTOR

Wu Jiaxuan¹, Teo Yao Hao¹, Tan Zhi Zheng Varen¹, Ong Pang Hao²

¹ National University of Singapore, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, 10 Medical Dr, Singapore 117597, Singapore

² Ministry of Health Office for Healthcare Transformation

Background

“Beyond hospital to community” represents the shift in focus towards step-down care in Singapore’s healthcare system. In the primary care sector, Community Care Providers (CCPs) are pivotal in providing supplementary and ancillary medical and social services. They frequently collaborate with other healthcare providers and are heterogenous in terms of the populations they serve. This cross-sectional study was conducted to map out the Singaporean healthcare referral processes between Community Care Providers, General Practitioners (GPs) and tertiary hospitals.

Methods

This is a qualitative study of 12 CCPs via semi-structured individual in-depth interviews with their representatives. Using an ethnographic approach, iterative analysis of the interview content was carried out. The workflow for referral processes was distilled. Challenges faced by CCPs during healthcare referrals were also identified through thematic analysis.

Results

5 flow charts illustrating the healthcare referral processes between CCPs and hospital, CCPs and GPs, and between CCPs were generated. Referral routes are categorized according to type of institution referring, subsidy status of patients and type of conditions. Specific challenges brought up in the corresponding stage of the referral pathway were also identified.

Conclusion

This study gained a deeper understanding of the local healthcare referral system, which could pave the way to revolutionary solutions to improve primary care. Recommendations were made by CCPs for change in the referral process.