

## **Abstract**

### **Background**

Case management is being developed as an essential part of mental health service delivery worldwide. In Hong Kong, a new pilot program using intensive case management approach was established in 2008. This project explores the effectiveness of intensive case management compared with the existing community psychiatric nursing service for people with severe mental illness in Hong Kong.

### **Study design**

Prospective, non-blinded matched controlled study.

### **Method**

Outcomes of 80 subjects in the intensive case management (ICM) and 80 subjects in the conventional psychiatric nursing service (CPNS) were compared at twelve months.

### **Main outcome measures**

Primary outcomes were number of admissions, length of stays in psychiatric hospitals and accident and emergency department attendances during the 12 months period. Secondary outcomes included symptoms, quality of life indices and employment status.

### **Settings**

The New Territories East region, Hong Kong.

## **Results**

Those receiving ICM had less in-patient service utilization in terms of length of stay and the number of admissions to psychiatric hospitals. 71.8% in the ICM group had no admission after twelve months, vs 42.3% in the CPNS group. The mean length of stay was 18.3 days (median: 0 days) in the ICM group vs 41.8 days (median 10 days) in the CPNS group at twelve months. They also had superior outcomes with fewer emergency department attendances and mild improvement in symptoms control. No improvement in quality of life or employment status were found.

## **Conclusion**

Intensive case management is effective in reducing hospitalizations and provides alternative community treatment for those with severe mental illness. Understanding which components and mechanisms of intensive case management provide its benefits and its overall cost effectiveness would be the next area of interest.

## **Declaration of interest**

None.

Keywords: intensive case management, hospitalization, severe mental illness

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