Wong Yat Cheung Maggie

Presentation Title

A Review of the Role of Occupational Health Services in Hong Kong Hospitals: an Historical Perspective and COVID-19 Experience

Author

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Abstract:

Background

This paper reviews the growth of the Occupational Health Service (OHS) in Hong Kong (HK) from the 1960s to 2022 with the aim of recommending practicable strategies for improvement. The review informs stakeholders how different factors triggered change and how they led to a sustainable and practicable service.

Method

The findings from a review of HK Special Administrative Government reports, historical papers and newspapers were compared to the results from a related (2017) study by the author, using a Sequential Mixed Method data collection.

Results

In 2017, the author's study reported that: OHS practice in the sampled HK hospitals complied with local legislation, and internationally recognized standards of OHS practice were implemented as required; but OHS consumers said that employer and senior staff attitudes were impediments to receiving a more practicable and appropriate service. Between 2019 and 2022 the COVID-19 pandemic saw the HK healthcare system overwhelmed by staff burnout, infection and even death. Lessons from the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome epidemic in HK, should have lead to more effective OHS measures leading up to 2019.

Conclusion

OHS policy makers and providers need to be better informed and supported in their complex role in affecting workplace culture where stakeholders have very different views. The key decision-makers should re-focus away from processes, towards the practicable needs of the frontline staff, with positive

consequences for the consumers. Consumer ownership of the provided services is key to their effectiveness if the OHS's mission is truly to deliver what the consumers need.

Biography of presenting author (should not exceed 100 words)
Dr Wong Yat Cheung Maggie has over 20 years of clinical experience that includes critical care, oncology, rehabilitation and primary health care. In addition, she has worked as a Rehabilitation Adviser in Australia and Worker Injury Risk Management Manger and Lifestyle Educator in Hong Kong. She developed and taught several occupational health-related curriculums at the tertiary level in Hong Kong and received a grant from Radio and Television Hong Kong to produce a lifestyle modification broadcasting series. Dr Wong has been invited to give more than 20 occupational health talks by various industries such as construction, textiles and health care.

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