

Perceived Need for Community Geriatric Services: A Survey at a Regional Hospital in Singapore in an Inpatient Setting

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Abstract

Our primary aim was to study the need for community services as perceived by the elderly and their relatives. A secondary objective was to determine the predictive factors of need for these services.

This is a survey of 115 consecutive non-institutionalised patients admitted to a hospital geriatric department and their relatives. Twenty-seven elderly patients without cognitive impairment and 115 relatives were interviewed as to their need for community services after discharge. Services most needed by patients were: 24-hour medical helpline (33%), emergency alarm system (19%), social helpline (14%) and day care centre (13%). Services most needed by relatives were: 24-hour medical helpline (70%), emergency alarm system (40%), home visits by doctors (40%), respite care (35%), day care centre (35%) and transport service (33%). There were low levels of need for home help service, meal delivery service and the befriender service. Important predictive factors of need were: low ECAQ (Elderly Cognitive Assessment Questionnaire) score, low Barthel score, and absence of a carer. The development of community geriatric services in Singapore should be guided by the perceived needs of the elderly and their relatives/care-givers. This study is limited by its hospital-based perspective and small numbers. We recommend that further community-based studies be carried out to complement our study and extend our findings.

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Key words: Elderly, Emergency services, Non-institutionalised patients, Predictive factors

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