



Southcare Geriatric Flying Squad – An Initiative to Improve Quality of Care in Aged Care Facilities Local Solutions

Introduction

Frail elderly residents admitted to hospital from aged care facilities may be better cared for in the facility itself. Patient outcomes are shown to be better if they are treated in their own environment to reduce complications such as delirium¹, falls and infections. Reducing avoidable admissions has indirect impact on reducing hospital burden and health care related expenditure.² A readily available physician service has been shown to be effective in reducing avoidable admissions.³

Aim

The Southcare Geriatric Flying Squad aims to improve acute and palliative care services in aged care facilities and simultaneously reduce ambulance travel and emergency department and hospital admissions.

Method

With the approval of the General Practitioner, aged care facility residents who deteriorate and potentially need hospital admission are referred to the Flying squad. Review by Geriatrician or Nurse Practitioner is undertaken within 2- 4 hours of receiving referral and management plan is in place. Patient, family members and GPs are well informed of treatment decisions, which add to patient and family satisfaction



Southcare Geriatric Flying Squad (Left to Right): A/Prof Peter Gonski, Staff Specialist Geriatrician Dr Shikha Jain, Staff Specialist Geriatrician Ms Nicole Wedell, Nursing Co-Director Aged & Extended Care Ms Ange Patras, Nurse Practitioner, Dr Nicholas Collins Chair, NSW Health Hospital in the Home Program

Results

- 491 residents referred between 01 November 2011 and 30 June 2013.
- 378 emergency presentations and 348 hospital admissions prevented over a 19 month period.
- average time taken to see residents was 90 minutes
- most common referrals were chest infections/ aspiration pneumonia, delirium, end of life care, CCF and cellulitis
- approximately 20% of all referred patients were provided palliative care in their usual environment , highlighting the futility of admission for this subgroup of patients at an extreme end of frailty who would not benefit from active and invasive treatment
- 'highly satisfactory' ratings from patient, family members and nursing staff

Conclusion

The Southcare Geriatric Flying Squad forms an important part of Sutherland Hospital's strategy for improving patient's access to timely, effective clinical care.

This requires excellent teamwork, collaboration with the Southcare services, Sutherland Shire General practitioners, nursing staff of residential aged care facilities, Sutherland hospital emergency team, community services, patients and their families

References

1. Caplan G A, Does "Hospital in the Home" treatment prevent delirium? Aging Health 2008; 4: 69 – 74
2. Grabowski D C, O'Malley A J, Barhydt N R, The costs and potential savings associated with nursing home hospitalizations. Health Affairs 2007; 26: 1753-1761
3. Ouslander J G, Perloe M, Givens J H et al. Reducing Potentially Avoidable Hospitalizations of Nursing Home Residents: Results of a Pilot Quality Improvement Project. J Am Med Dir Assoc 2009; 10: 644–652.

Outcomes of Referral to Southcare Geriatric Flying Squad

