

## **Abstract**

**Objectives:** Following the global trend of deinstitutionalization, concerns have been raised about the increasing psychiatric readmission rates in many places including Hong Kong. Information regarding the risk factors for early psychiatric readmission was limited. The objectives of this study were to determine the clinical factors among psychiatric patients who were readmitted within 28 days of discharge, so as to identify patients at higher risk for early psychiatric readmission and to provide insight into interventions which could potentially reduce readmission.

**Method:** A retrospective case-control design was used with 309 case subjects who were readmitted within 28 days of discharge and a matched control group of 309 subjects who had been previously hospitalized in the same period as the case subjects from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2011, but who in contrast had not been readmitted within 28 days. The setting was a regional hospital with psychiatric unit in Hong Kong. Socio-demographic data, baseline clinical characteristics and characteristics of the index admission were identified and analyzed.

**Results:** Risk factors for psychiatric readmission within 28 days of discharge identified in this study include history of suicidal attempt (OR = 5.52), higher number of previous psychiatric hospitalizations (OR = 1.13), presence of interpersonal relationship problem before admission (OR = 12.14) and poor drug adherence after discharge (OR = 119.00). Protective factors found include higher number of years of education (OR = 0.79), documented discussion of discharge plan with patients' care-giver (OR = 0.05), community support service (OR = 0.08) and medical social worker referral (OR = 0.17).

**Conclusion:** This study identified eight clinical factors influencing the risk of early psychiatric readmission. In particular, five of these factors could be regarded as potentially modifiable and could be the targets of interventions to reduce early psychiatric readmission, including reinforcement of drug adherence, mediation of interpersonal problem, discussion of discharge plan with care-giver, as well as community support service referral and medical social worker referral.

**Key words:** Psychiatric readmission, early readmission, rehospitalization, risk factors, modifiable.