

## Abstract

**BACKGROUND:** During the process of deinstitutionalization, there will be some long-stay psychiatric patients who could not be successfully discharged and they are considered “difficult-to-place” patients. There were limited data concerning long-stay patients in Hong Kong.

**METHOD:** This study consisted of 2 parts. The first part was a case record review study which investigated the 5-year outcome of all long-stay psychiatric patients in a mental hospital after implementation of deinstitutionalization programmes. The second part was a cross-sectional study which assessed the clinical, physical and social states of difficult-to-place patients.

**RESULTS:** For the 5-year outcome of 728 long-stay psychiatric patients, 51% of them were successfully discharged while 42% became difficult-to-place patients. Most of the difficult-to-place patients had prominent symptoms of schizophrenia, unacceptable behaviour, cognitive problems, or poor social network. Half of them refused to leave hospital.

**CONCLUSION:** Many of the difficult-to-place patients had prominent symptoms of schizophrenia, unacceptable behaviours, cognitive problem, poor social network, or refused to leave. Suitable specialized care and discharge plan should be formulated according to their special needs.