

Abstract

Objective

To identify clinical determinants of length of stay of patients in psychiatry and to assess whether length of stay is associated with readmission rate.

Setting

Patients admitted to Psychiatric Inpatient Unit of Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital during the one-year period from January 1 2001 to December 31 2001.

Subjects

Cases were those residing in Hong Kong East Hospitals' Cluster admitted during the study period and discharged before December 31 2004 for the index admission. Only information from the first admission during the study period was collected if patients got multiple admissions during that year.

Measurement

Different sociodemographic, administrative, clinical, treatment and service factors were studied to see whether they were associated with the dependent variable of length of stay. Information concerning readmission within 1 and 3 months was also collected. Data was gathered from medical case records, discharge summary and computer records.

Results

There were totally 760 cases with case notes successfully retrieved. Mean length of stay is 62 days. Race, marital status, occupation, discharge destination, PFU status, type of discharge, criminal record, diagnosis, previous aggression, suicide history, suicide attempt before admission, duration of past psychiatric admission, no. of previous admission, age of onset of illness, duration of illness, Depot, Clozapine treatment, consultation needed, number of consultation needed, transfer needed, day hospital arrangement after discharge, OT and MSW services were found to correlate significantly with length of stay of the study sample ($p < 0.05$). 13 selected variables from the above list accounted for 47.6% of the total variance in length of stay. Length of stay was found to have no correlation with readmission within 1 and 3 months.

Conclusions

Many of the predictive variables for length of stay of patients were readily available on admission, effort should be made at an early stage to identify the potential long-stay patients and proactive measures should be implemented to minimize the length of stay.

Keywords

Length of stay, predict, psychiatric patients, variables, clinical determinants, readmission.