

Visiting Community Pharmacists Project

To the Editor—In response to the article “Prevention of medication error and unintentional drug poisoning in the elderly”,¹ I agree with and support the belief that health professionals visiting residential care homes can prevent medication incidents.

During the past two decades, many new drugs and technologies have been developed. In females, the life expectancy at birth has increased from 79 years in 1984 to 84.6 years in 2004, whereas male life expectancy has increased from 73 years in 1984 to 78.6 years in 2004. Most elderly people need to take many different medicines, therefore a proper medication management system is very important for residential care homes. A medication management system not only focuses on storage, drug administration and record keeping but also on reconciliation. Health care professionals can play a vital part in medication management and safety in residential care homes.

As pharmacists have adequate knowledge of drugs, they can make visits to residential care homes to advise on drug management systems and ensure that the staff at residential care homes are following the guidelines.

A Visiting Community Pharmacists Project at old-

age homes in the Hong Kong West Cluster started in February 2006. More than 10 community pharmacist volunteers visited 20 old-age homes regularly. The aim of the project is to promote drug safety and quality drug management systems at the old-age homes. Visiting Community Pharmacists provide a medication reconciliation service to elderly people who have been discharged from hospitals. Pharmacists also review the medications and the drug records and ensure that the staff at the old-age homes are giving the right medication to elderly people recently discharged from hospital. This can prevent any medication incidents caused by a change to drug regimens after discharge from hospital. Therefore, I agree with Dr T Chan that there should be regular programmes promoting drug safety monitoring and training.

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Reference

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