

Press Release

Gleneagles Hong Kong Hospital launches Hong Kong's first private Behavioural Health inpatient service

Offering round-the-clock specialist care in a safe and healing environment

Cases of mental health disorders are on the rise in Hong Kong in recent years and demand for mental health service has been increasing. In some cases, patients may not be able to achieve full recovery through outpatient treatment alone and inpatient care and monitoring is also needed for better recovery. Nevertheless, limited accessibility to inpatient care and patients' reluctance to be admitted to psychiatric wards may deprive patients of prompt and appropriate treatment.

Gleneagles Hong Kong Hospital (GHK) has recently launched the first private inpatient behavioural health service in Hong Kong for patients with mild mental health conditions such as anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder, depression, early dementia, early psychosis, eating disorder etc.

An additional inpatient care option for patients with mild mental health conditions

Mr Dirk Schraven, Chief Executive Officer of GHK, said, "GHK is pleased to have launched the first private behavioural health ward in Hong Kong to meet the needs for quality and accessible inpatient mental health care. Our behavioural health ward provides behavioural, psychological and medication treatment for patients with mild mental health conditions and is managed by a team of experienced psychiatrists and nurses specialised in psychiatry. This inpatient service offers an additional option for patients who need inpatient care and prefer more privacy and space in a safe and healing setting, offering faster access to specialist treatment that contributes to optimal recovery."

Rising demand for mental health services from increasing number of mood disorder cases

According to the 2018 Mental Health Review Report released by Food and Health Bureau, extrapolation from worldwide data indicates that between 1.1 million to 1.8 million people have a mental disorder, which accounts for around 15% to 25% of Hong Kong's population.¹ There is a growing demand for psychiatric services, in 2011/12, about 187,000 patients with

¹ Mental Health Review Report released by Food and Health Bureau. Available at:
https://www.fhb.gov.hk/download/press_and_publications/otherinfo/180500_mhr/c_mhr_full_report.pdf

mental illnesses received treatment from public hospitals and the number has risen to 226,000¹ in 2015/16. According to the latest figures released by the Hospital Authority, the waiting time for public psychiatric services is as long as 131 weeks². **Professor Michael Wong, GHK's Psychiatry Specialist**, said, "The report stresses the importance of accessibility of quality mental health services. With the private sector providing quality inpatient mental health services in a timely and safe manner, patients are given another option amid the rising demand for mental health services. In the longer run, we hope that this can help relieve the burden in the public sector."

Prompt treatment to prevent deterioration of condition

Mood disorders, which include depression, anxiety disorder, eating disorder etc, are caused by the imbalance of neurotransmitters such as serotonin, dopamine and norepinephrine, and it is an illness that cannot be healed through willpower alone. "Patients will need to receive psychological and medical treatment, even a change of environment, in order to stabilise their condition and facilitate rehabilitation. Without proper treatment, it may affect the functioning and quality of patients' daily activities. It may result in life-threatening damages, such as self-inflicted injuries, violence towards the others or even suicidal ideation if the condition continues to worsen," said **Dr Carmen Lam, Honorary Consultant in Psychiatry of GHK**.

Mood disorder patients tend to have weaker ability to manage stress and address problems, they are more prone to relying on external dependencies such as alcohol and medication for stress relieve, which may lead to addiction. At the same time, under the influence of drug and alcohol, patients may be more susceptible to developing negative or self-harming thoughts, intensifying existing mood disorder and leading to a vicious cycle.³

It is therefore important that patients with mild conditions seek proper treatment in a timely manner to prevent the conditions from worsening. During outpatient consultation, patients will be diagnosed and receive various body checks and tests. Behavioural health assessment will also be conducted. Psychiatrist will arrange medication treatment, behavioural therapy or counselling as appropriate. After initial assessment and diagnosis, patients will need to take medications regularly and schedule follow-up consultation to keep their conditions under

² The waiting time of new cases at Psychiatric Out-Patient Clinic of Hospital Authority. Available at: https://www.ha.org.hk/visitor/sopc_waiting_time.asp?id=7&lang=CHIB5

³ National Institute on Drug Abuse: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/rrcomorbidity.pdf>

control.

In some cases, patients who face chronic stressors upon returning home may not take medications regularly as prescribed, this may give rise to instability of condition. Some patients may experience side effects such as dizziness and sleeplessness upon taking medication, while others may experience withdrawal symptoms such as cramps and seizures. **Dr Lam** said, “Under such circumstances, specialists may advise patients to be admitted to a hospital to receive further assessment, as well as to receive clinical treatment and monitoring. A safe and quiet setting allows patients to temporarily isolate themselves from daily stressors and focus on their treatments, whereas medical professionals can monitor the patients’ reaction to medications, providing timely medication adjustments and 24-hour nursing care.”

Specialist care in a safe and healing environment with a high degree of privacy

GHK’s behavioural health ward offers en-suite double rooms in a healing and serene environment. The semi-private setting provides the space, comfort and a high degree of privacy that patients need for a stress-free stay. Safety installations and anti-ligature designs are in place in patient rooms to ensure patients’ safety. These installations include collapsible bed curtain, wall-mounted call bell, locked TV cupboard and electric socket, handleless doorknob, ligature-resistant showerhead and hand rail, and anti-collision protection. All doors in the ward are system-controlled, with the public area covered by a 24-hour CCTV system.

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