

26 October 2015

NSW-first Hospital in the Home service at Prince of Wales Hospital celebrates 20 years

Prince of Wales Hospital (POWH) is celebrating 20 years since its establishment of the first Hospital in the Home (HITH) service in NSW.

HITH, an innovative approach to patient-centred care, allows suitable consenting patients to be treated in their home, as an alternative to inpatient (in hospital) care.

Established in October 1995 at POWH, the HITH service at POWH was the first in NSW and has since played a key role in founding the Hospital in the Home Society of Australasia, which POWH led for six years.

Associate Professor Gideon Caplan, Director, Post-Acute Care Services, Prince of Wales Hospital, said HITH provides clinical care which significantly improves health outcomes for patients, as well as reducing the length of stay in hospital, or in some instances avoids hospital admission altogether.

“A range of clinical conditions can be effectively and safely managed without a person needing to stay in hospital such as cellulitis, pneumonia, deep vein thrombosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and urinary tract infections,” A/Professor Caplan said.

“Some of the benefits for patients who are treated through the HITH service includes reduction in mortality and hospital-acquired infections, having the ability to remain in the comfort of their own home, eating their own food and sleeping in their own bed.

“Providing this option for patients who are suitable saves them an unnecessary stay in hospital and makes sure we have beds available for patients who need to be in hospital for their care.”

Since 1995, POWH has assisted several similar care at home services nationally and published 35 publications on HITH.

“POWH also played an important role in introducing HITH into other NSW hospitals by holding open days and through the National Hospitals Demonstration Program, during which POWH mentored 17 other hospitals around Australia as they established HITH services,” A/Prof Caplan said.

As a leader in this area of healthcare, POWH has collected important information around this patient centred approach, by running two randomised controlled trials and a meta-analysis, which showed HITH improves health outcomes and:

- decreases geriatric complications, including confusion/delirium, bowel and bladder problems
- decreases wound infections by 1/3
- decreases readmissions by 25%

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Media contact: Poppy Diamantis 02 9382 8398 or 0411 730 842

healthdirect AUSTRALIA – providing expert health advice 24 hours a day to NSW residents – Tel. 1800 022 222

The analysis also found that HITH increases both patient and carer satisfaction and decreases overall costs on the health system.

“Since being established, HITH at POWH has treated over 10,000 patients, currently averaging around 1000 per year,” A/Prof Caplan said.

“This equates to thousands of patients avoiding re-hospitalisation, or worse, having their condition deteriorate.”

Many patients who have received HITH care have said they prefer this option of treatment, claiming it’s just like being in hospital, but with all the comforts of home and with less disruption to family members and pets.

“Next time you are at the hospital, ask your doctor or the emergency department specialist if your condition can be treated at home or through an ambulatory clinic,” A/Prof Caplan said.

“You may be able to receive all or part of your acute care while being able to stay at home.”

For more information on HITH, visit: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Performance/Pages/HITH.aspx>

South Eastern Sydney Local Health District

Media contact: Poppy Diamantis 02 9382 8398 or 0411 730 842

healthdirect AUSTRALIA – providing expert health advice 24 hours a day to NSW residents – Tel. 1800 022 222