

Evaluation of an Advanced Allied Health Assistant (Physiotherapy) Role on an Acute Medical Ward

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Context

- Acute medical ward admission
 - Decline in functional capacity
- Functional Maintenance Program (FMP)
 - Group exercise
 - Individual treatment



Background

Complex patients

- Older
- Co-morbidities

Higher turnover of patients

- More discharges
- More work for physiotherapists on medical wards

Shortage of physios:

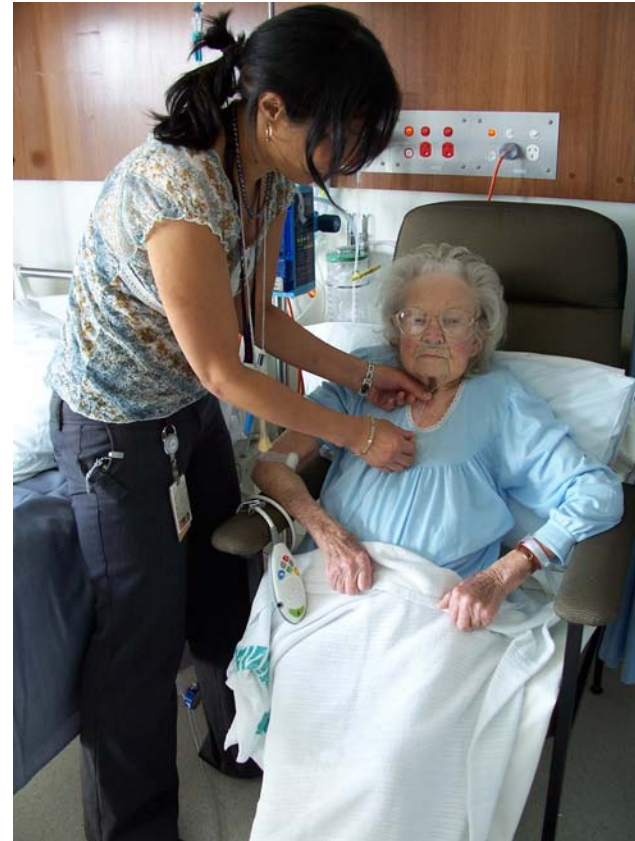
Advanced Role for Allied Health Assistants

Role redesign funded through project funded under the DHS Victoria Better Skills Best Care Program



Description of Amended Role: Physio Assistant

- ❑ Co-ordination of FMP referrals
- ❑ Implementation of FMP (group or individual)
- ❑ Participation in ward team meeting
- ❑ Implementation of patient oxygen requirements according to plan
- ❑ Assessment of mobility & safety for discharge





Amended Role: Key competencies(1)

- FMP protocols & procedures
- Medical terminology & documentation requirements
- Emergency procedures within hospital
- Mobility
 - Strong manual handling skills
 - Understand falls & safety risks
 - Knowledge of suitable gait aides
- Oxygen Therapy
 - Basic theory oxygen saturation levels and practical implication
 - Understanding of guidelines for implementation

Amended Role: Key competencies(2)

- Exercise Groups
 - Basic anatomy & exercise physiology
 - Vital signs & implications for exercise
 - Exercise delivery and risk factors for exercise

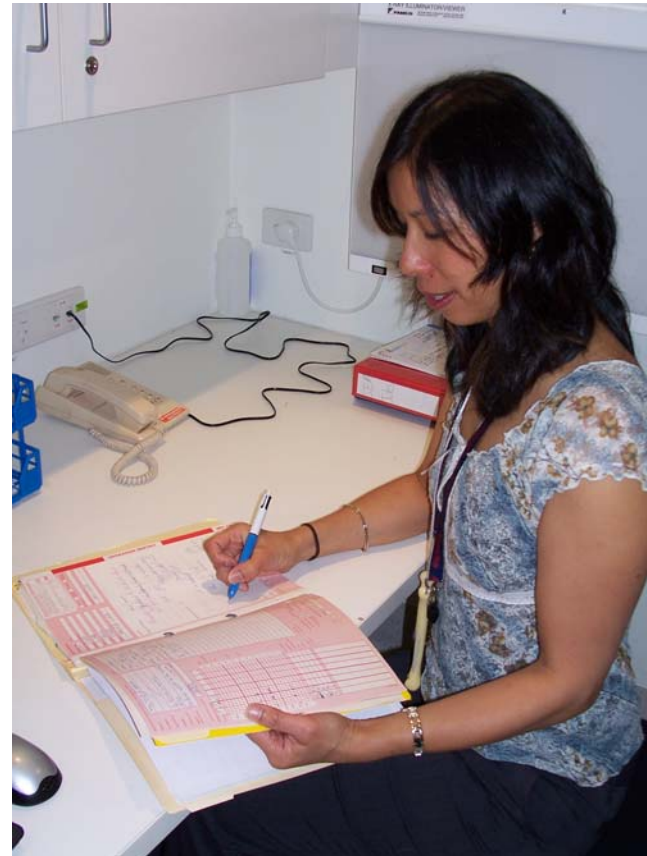
- Strong communication skills

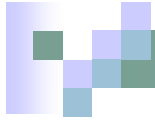


Additional training

- Highly competent and experienced AHA was recruited for this pilot project. No formal educational background

- Additional training:
 - Advanced clinical skills
 - Professional communication
 - Discharge planning
 - Administrative procedures
 - Advanced IT skills

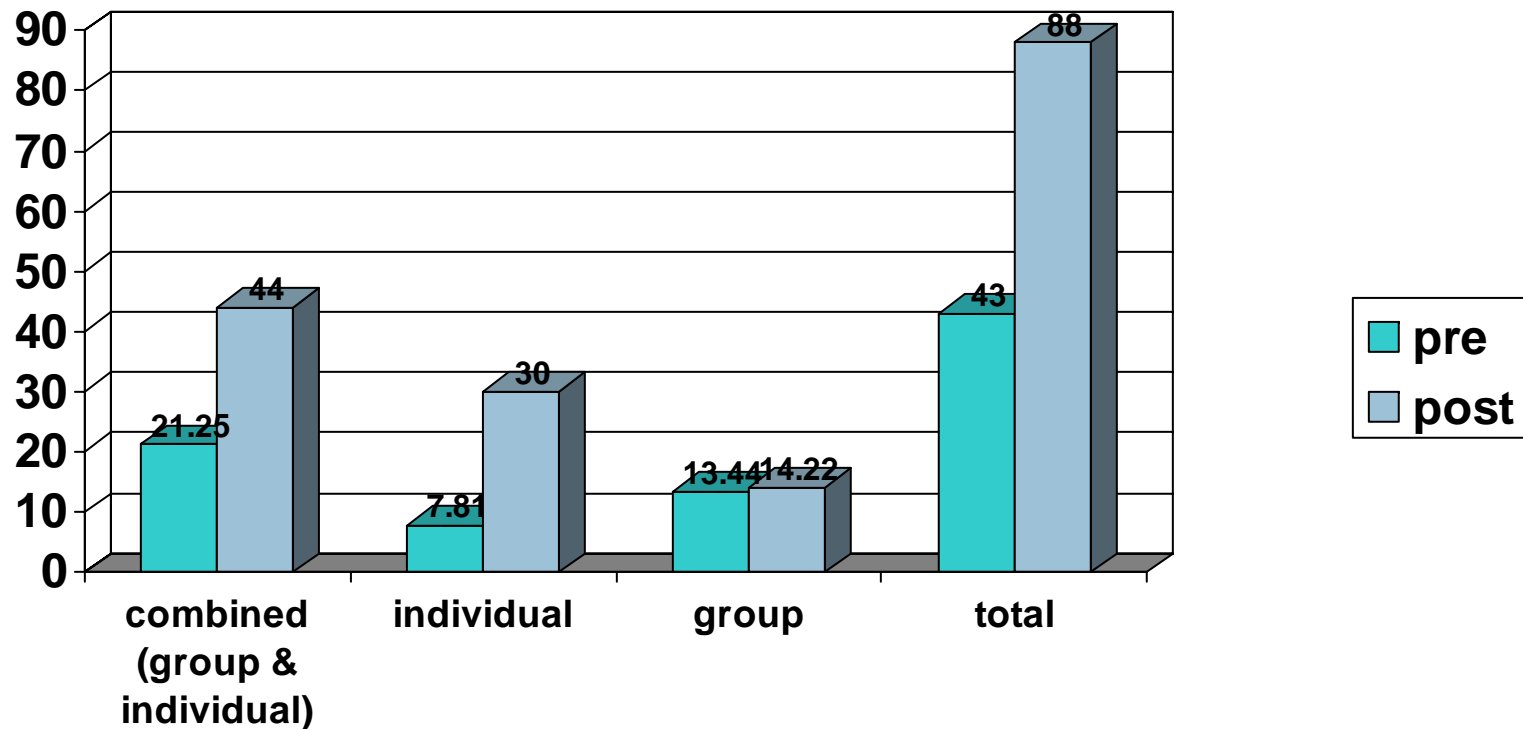




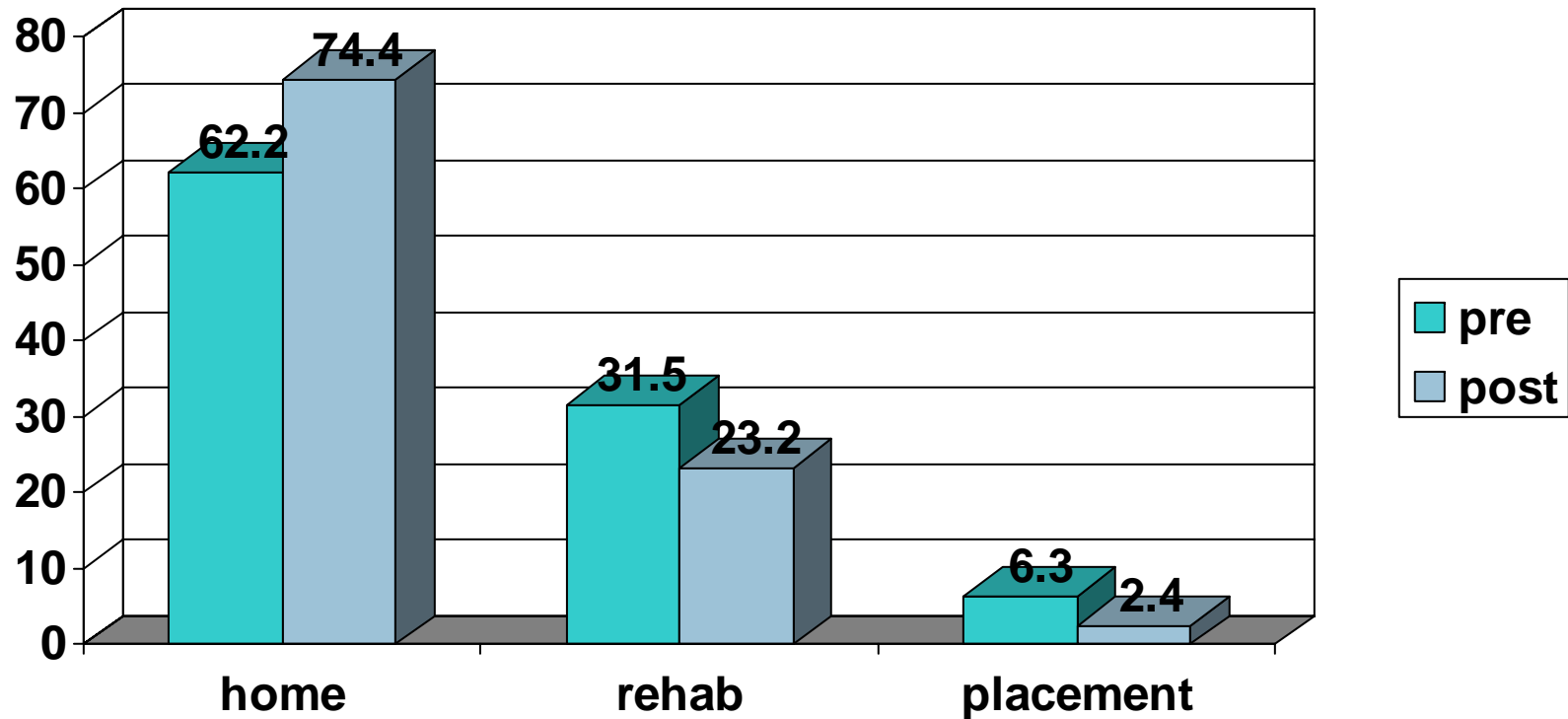
Aims of Evaluation

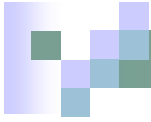
1. Quantify changes in amount and type of care delivered
2. Compare LOS
3. Compare discharge destination

Ward patients receiving FMP (%)

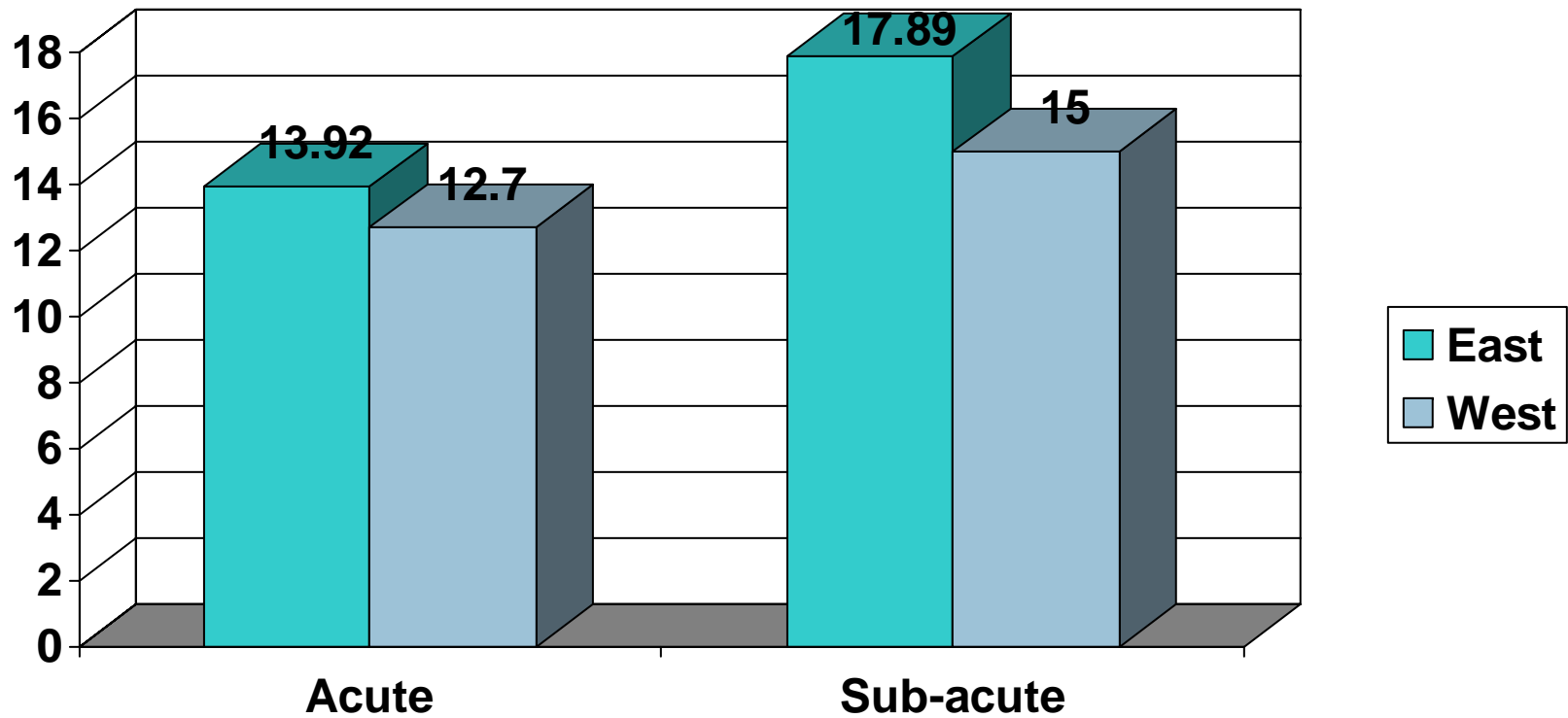


Discharge destination





Mean LOS (acute & sub-acute)





Summary of main outcomes

- A more efficient service – double the number of patients receiving daily FMP Rx (43 – 88%)
- A greater number of patients received individual FMP treatment (284% increase)
- A greater number of patients were discharged directly home (20% increase)



Summary of main outcomes

- Fewer patients were discharged to a high-level care facility
- A reduction in acute (8.8%) and sub-acute (16%) average LOS was demonstrated
- A very high level of staff satisfaction with the amended role



Challenges

- Sustainability of new roles
 - Additional funding allowed more intensive intervention
- Human resources issues
 - Appropriate remuneration for advanced skills
- Formal education & training
 - New Certificate IV should be ideal for this but no RTO is currently offering the Physiotherapy specific stream
- Clinical Governance
 - Appropriate credentialling, supervision and risk management



Conclusion

- Possible to train a physiotherapy assistant to undertake roles previously thought to require a physiotherapist
- At the same time better patient outcomes can be achieved

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