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Clinical Practice

Extended Diagnosis and Treatment Unit (EDTU): Paradigm Shift

NUH was the first hospital in Singapore to pilot a project that started in February 2005 involving short stay (<24 hours) for selective patients seen in the Emergency Department (ED).

During this period a total of 1200 patients were admitted to the unit with 1000 patient successfully discharged home after intensive treatment and observation within 24 hours. This initiative helped save the hospital about 200 hospital bed days. Apart from the bed days saved there was also considerable financial savings: an average of 30% reduction in bill size per episode.

Patients were deemed eligible for entry into the EDTU if they fulfilled inclusion criteria in any one of the 15 predetermined conditions. These conditions included asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chest pain, syncope, abdominal pain, heart failure, head injury, gastroenteritis, pneumonia to name a few.

Management of patients in the EDTU followed strict evidence based protocols with prior inputs from the relevant specialties. There was also integration of care with review by chronic disease case managers who would then coordinate follow up and discharge education.

EDTU continues to play an integral part in right siting of care. Plans are in the pipeline for expanding the service and further integration with other medical services. There is already a HMDP trained clinician and another who will be sent to Cleveland Clinic USA leading the unit. The unit's nursing officer leader has also been trained at this facility.