



Improving the Efficiency of Inpatient Smoking Cessation Counselling (SCC) Programme

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Introduction

As part of Ministry of Health's (MOH) preventive health strategy, smoking cessation programmes are implemented in healthcare institutions to reduce tobacco use and alleviate the impact of smoking-related diseases.

At Sengkang General Hospital (SKH), only 34.7% of identified smokers had received brief 'ABC' (Ask, Brief Advice and Cessation) counselling from inpatient nurses, while 5.7% received intensive smoking cessation counselling (SCC) between January to October 2023. This is far below MOH's target that 50% of smokers are to receive intensive SCC during inpatient stay. There is hence a need to review the efficiency of this programme to improve the uptake of SCC for smokers admitted to SKH.

Aim

This project aims improve the SCC programme outreach to smokers by demonstrating an increase in:

- Brief ABC counselling conducted by inpatient nurses
- Referrals to intensive SCC
- Intensive SCC sessions conducted by inpatient SCC counsellors

Methodology

Existing work processes were reviewed to identify problems and interventions were implemented to proactively identify and actively engage smokers who are:

- Motivated (agree for SCC)
- At high-risk (as clinically recommended).

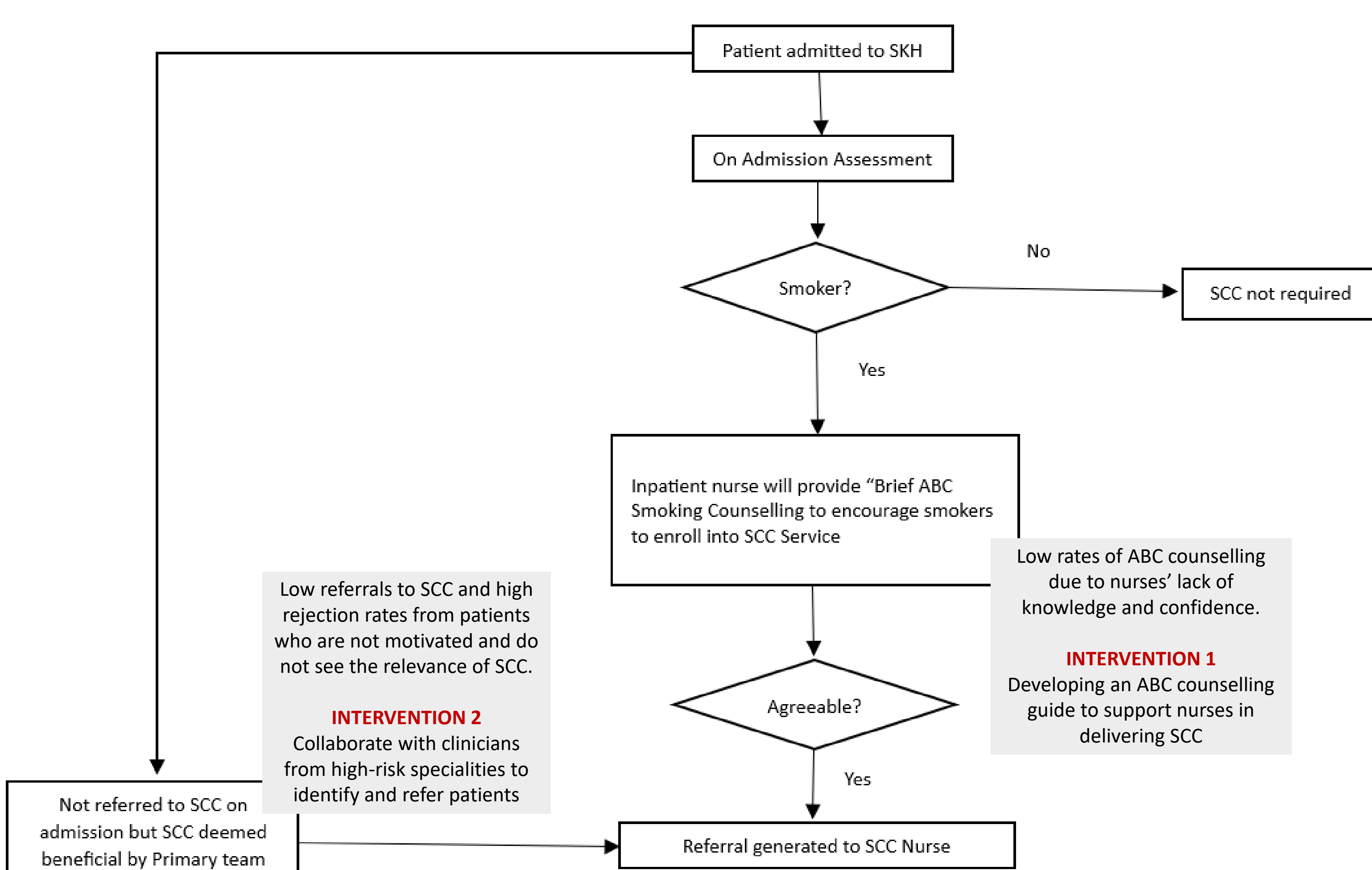


Figure 1 : Inpatient Referral Workflow for SCC and Interventions.

Intervention 1

Develop an ABC counselling guide to support inpatient nurses in delivering succinct yet impactful brief counselling

Intervention 2

Collaborate with clinicians from high-risk specialities such as cardiology, neurology, rehabilitation and respiratory medicine to proactively identify patients as part of evidence-based care

Roadshows were conducted, and referral and counselling rates of brief smoking cessation advice and intensive SCC were monitored.

Result

The programme was implemented in February 2024.

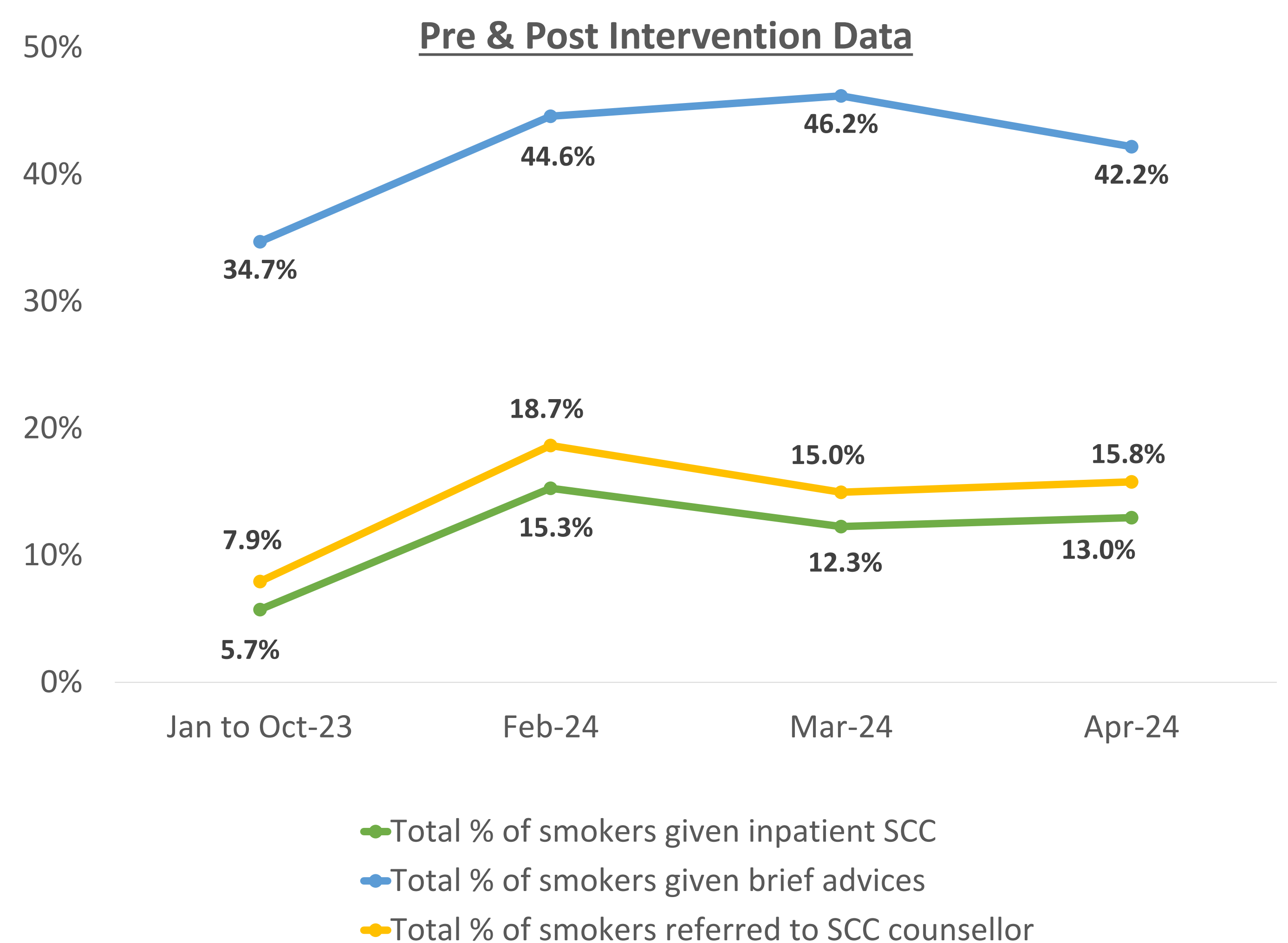


Figure 2 : Pre- and Post-intervention Counselling Rates

Data was compared pre-intervention (January to October 2023) and post-intervention (February to April 2024). Since implementation, the percentage of smokers who received the ABC brief counselling had increased from 34.7% to 42.2% per month. The referral rate to SCC nurses had also rose from 7.9% to 15.8% and the proportion of smokers receiving inpatient smoking cessation counselling improved from 5.7% to 13.0% per month.

Conclusion

Uptake of SCC has been elusive despite conventional attempts by SCC nurses in engaging active smokers. The implementation of an approach targeted at motivated and high-risk smokers is able to improve SCC referrals and counselling rates in SKH.

Implications for Practice

It is evident that focusing on proactive identification of high-risk and motivated patients is both an effective and efficient means to improve engagement and outreach in SCC. Further monitoring is required to ascertain the sustainability of above efforts. Meanwhile, SKH will be incorporating and expanding on above interventions to further enhance the quantity and quality of SCC.

1. Expand collaboration with more specialties in proactive identification of smokers for SCC.
2. Improve education for inpatient and SCC nurses in delivering smoking cessation related advice and counselling
3. Strength collaboration with community partners to continue supporting smokers in their smoking cessation journey post discharge.