VIRTUAL HOSPITAL IN THE HOME (VHITH) RESPIRATORY PATHWAY
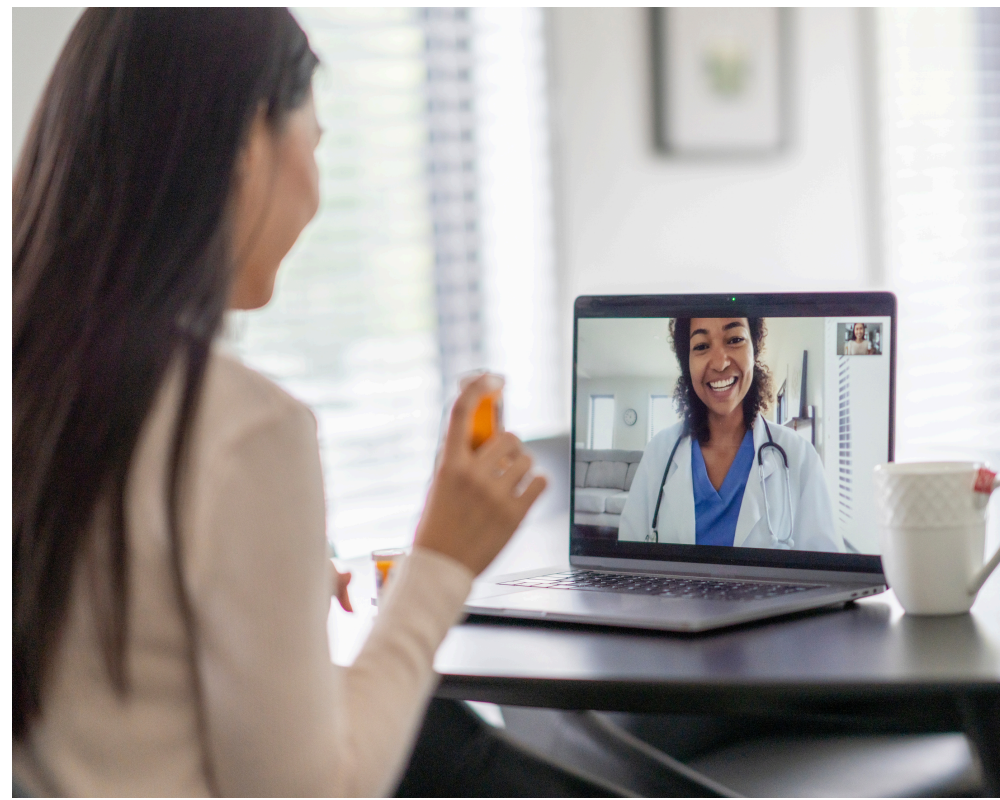
Acute and Extended Care in Community (Primary & Community Health)
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The pathway aims to enhance safety and care for COPD and asthma patients by facilitating early discharge and maintaining patient participation, reducing readmission rates, and fostering patient-caregiver partnerships.

Background

The project enhances post-acute care for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Asthma patients, offering an alternative to hospital stays. The VHITH pathway provides ongoing management and assessment for respiratory conditions in non-acute or sub-acute settings promoting recovery, preventing unnecessary Emergency Department (ED) presentations, and avoiding hospital admissions

Patients receive care at home, including remote monitoring and education on respiratory symptom management. This model supports patient flow, reduces cost, increases patient satisfaction, and optimises resources

Method

- A multidisciplinary group, including respiratory clinical leads and Primary and Community Health representatives, developed the virtual pathway under Ministry of Health (MOH) guidance
- This protocol integrates virtual support for clinical and educational needs, optimising medication management, inhaler techniques, symptom monitoring, and action plans
- Electronic processes for admission and registration were established, and a communication strategy fostered collaboration across HITH teams. Education initiatives targeted clinical nurse specialists, EDs, Respiratory wards and local GPs

Results

Since implementation, 35 patients have been referred to the service with only two readmissions.

Feedback has been positive, and a formal survey tool is in development. Continuous stakeholder meetings address improvements

Conclusion

A patient-centric approach with structured inclusion criteria and client education on virtual platform usage sustains the pathway

The model promotes collaboration among hospital teams, GPs, HITH, and community nursing with plans to expand similar pathways

This framework offers lessons for scalability in diverse healthcare settings

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