

**Assignment 2: District Health Centres and Ethical Principles**

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## **Part A: District Health Centre**

Hong Kong has a high life expectancy, with both males and females living up to 83.2 and 87.9 years respectively, according to 2021 statistics. However, with an aging population, the prevalence of chronic diseases is on the rise. The government has set up District Health Centres (DHCs) to address the high prevalence of chronic diseases by providing primary healthcare services in a coordinated, comprehensive, continuing, and person-centered manner. The aim is to shift the focus from curative treatment to disease prevention, with DHCs as the hub for coordinating primary healthcare services. The focus on primary prevention and the introduction of DHCs is likely to lead to a more accessible, coordinated, and effective healthcare system hence reducing the burden of chronic diseases in Hong Kong's aging population. DHCs can apply social marketing concepts to provide continuing, accessible, comprehensive, and people-oriented care in the context of family and community. This essay will examine the attributes, features, quality, design, and branding of DHCs' products from a social marketing perspective.

### **Product Characteristics of DHCs' Services**

#### **Attributes**

The product attributes of the services provided by the District Health Centres (DHCs) are crucial for ensuring that the primary healthcare needs of the citizens are met in a satisfactory manner. One of the key attributes of the DHCs is that they serve as the hub for coordinating

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their ability to work together with the private healthcare sector to provide customized primary

healthcare services which are attuned to the needs of individual communities that may not be catered for through public healthcare providers alone.

### **Features**

DHCs offer a wide variety of medical care services to the public, such as surgery, medicine, nursing, emergency services, pharmacy, physiotherapy, and other specialized medical services. This feature enables patients to access a comprehensive range of medical services without having to go to different healthcare providers, which saves time and reduces the cost of healthcare. For example, a patient who has undergone surgery in a hospital can receive

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clients' homes. A patient who is unable to visit the DHC due to mobility issues can receive home care services, such as wound care and physical therapy.

### **Quality**

Ensuring the quality of healthcare services is crucial in maintaining public trust and confidence. The government recognizes this and has put in place various measures to monitor

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the required standards. The plan to establish a Primary Healthcare commission that will be responsible for better management of primary healthcare service delivery, standard setting, quality assurance, and training of primary healthcare professionals will ensure that the right

services are provided at the right time and by qualified professionals, thus improved quality outcomes.

## **Design**

example of product design of DHCs' services is the implementation of a telehealth platform. With the advancement of technology and the increasing demand for remote healthcare

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effectiveness of service delivery. Through telehealth, patients who do not have to present to the hospital can receive medical advice and treatment without having to physically visit a healthcare facility, reducing the need for transportation and minimizing the risk of exposure to infectious diseases.

## **Branding**

DHCs' service branding is centered around promoting primary healthcare development and delivering prevention-centric healthcare services with the help of district-based medical-

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professionalism, commitment to clients, and unique values and characteristics. This branding is important because it helps to establish trust and credibility with patients, who are more likely to seek out healthcare services from a provider that has a positive reputation.

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## Part B: Ethical Principles, Rules, and Professional Issues

### Introduction

In today's complex and ever-changing healthcare environment, nurses face numerous ethical challenges that require them to navigate complex and sensitive situations. These ethical

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the healthcare system (Husted et al., 2014). In this case study, a registered nurse is confronted with a challenging decision regarding medication administration to two different patients. The ethical principles of beneficence and non-maleficence seem to be critical in this case study. Nursing is an inherently ethical and moral profession, and nurses must make moral decisions in their daily practices, not only in situations involving life and death but also in routine issues. This essay will explore the ethical principles, rules, and professional issues that are involved in this scenario.

### Moral Situation

The case nurse is working the night shift with another colleague, Betty, who is also a good friend. During their shift, they receive a batch of lab results that show that Vancomycin is

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When Betty learns about the blood results of Client A, she takes the dose of Vancomycin

prescribed for Client B and prepares it for Client A's use, who is still having a high fever with a GCS score of 13.

### **Analysis and Explanation**

To analyze and explain the moral situation that the case nurse is facing, I will use the ethical principles that we have learned, such as beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, as well as ethical rules and professional issues.

#### **Beneficence:**

The principle of beneficence in healthcare is the obligation of healthcare providers to act in the best interest of their patients and to promote their well-being. This principle includes a number of moral rules to prevent harm, remove conditions that will cause harm, help persons with disabilities, and rescue persons in danger (Varkey, 2021). This principle requires healthcare providers to do good for their patients and promote their well-being. In this case, the nurse has a

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administering it to Client A definitely violates this principle.

As noted by Cheraghi et al. (2023), healthcare professionals have to provide patient-centered care, and the patient's interest should always be at the center of ethical decisions. The duty to act for the benefit of the patient and promote their welfare is of utmost importance in healthcare. Throughout my experience, I have always found prioritization to be such a huge moral decision that requires extensive thought and consideration. If I was the case nurse, I would prioritize client A who is at an increased risk of sepsis. The principle of beneficence does not

justify withholding or delaying care without good reason. Nonetheless, as a healthcare provider, I would consult with my colleague and House Officer, and if we all agree, I proceed with prioritizing the needs of patients who require urgent care.

**Non-Maleficence:**

Non-maleficence is the ethical principle that requires healthcare providers to avoid harming their patients intentionally. In this case, the nurse may harm Client B by withholding his prescribed medication, which could potentially worsen his health condition. Similarly, not

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nurses are responsible for providing safe and competent care to their patients and must avoid any negligent or harmful actions (Haddad, 2022).

If I was the case nurse, I would immediately report the shortage of Vancomycin to the pharmacy and House Officer to request urgent delivery, and if the medications cannot be delivered urgently, I would consult with the House Officer and Betty before administering the

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potentially life-threatening infection, while also acknowledging the importance of providing safe and competent care to Patient B.

**Justice:**

Justice is the ethical principle that requires healthcare providers to treat their patients fairly and equitably. In this case, the case nurse is facing a dilemma in which she needs to balance the needs of two patients who require the same medication. The case necessitates the

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prioritize the client with the greater medical need. In this case, Client A has a potentially life-threatening infection and requires urgent treatment with Vancomycin, while Client B is stable and recovering well from a wound. By prioritizing Client A, the nurse would be allocating the limited resource based on need and ensuring that the patient who requires urgent treatment receives it.

**Professional Issues:**

Hong Kong's code of ethics and professional conduct requires nurses to practice safe and competent care, maintain professional standards, and collaborate with colleagues. Firstly, the nurse has a duty to practice safe and competent nursing practice. In this case, giving the last dose of

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requires the nurse to follow the orders and treatment plans of the House Officer. Deviating from the prescribed treatment plan could be considered a breach of the standard of care and may result



in disciplinary action. Thirdly, as the case nurse, I have a duty to collaborate with colleagues and co-workers to provide safe and competent care. In this case, I would collaborate with Betty to find a solution that does not compromise the safety and well-being of either patient (The Nursing Council of Hong Kong, 2015). Taking the last dose of Vancomycin from Client B may not be the most appropriate solution, and other options should be first considered, such as contacting the

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idea as this is in the best interest of the patient, who is in a critical condition and hence justifiable.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, nurses must navigate ethical dilemmas that arise in patient care. They have a professional duty to uphold ethical and moral principles and provide safe and effective care to their patients. To uphold ethical principles in the case study, the nurse must prioritize the well-being of both patients while minimizing harm and ensuring fairness. As the case nurse in this

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patient-centered care, and they must be prepared to navigate complex ethical dilemmas and make decisions that prioritize the well-being of their patients while upholding ethical principles, rules, and professionalism.

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