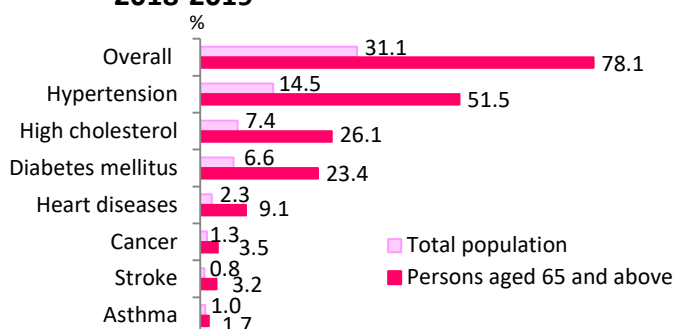




Public primary care services

Figure 1 — Persons with chronic health conditions in 2018-2019⁽¹⁾



Note: (1) The figures refer to percentages of persons with chronic health conditions as diagnosed by practitioners of Western medicine.

Figure 2 — Provision of GOP services by HA

No. of GOPCs/ Clusters	Total ⁽¹⁾	Evening clinics ⁽²⁾	Sundays and public holidays clinics ⁽³⁾
Hong Kong East	12	2	2
Hong Kong West	6	2	1
Kowloon East	8	2	1
Kowloon Central	13	6	3
Kowloon West	16	4	1
New Territories East	10	4	3
New Territories West	8	3	2
Total	73	23	13

Notes: (1) During weekdays, most GOPCs operate during 9:00 am-1:00 pm and 2:00 pm-5:00 pm. Among them, 69 provide services on Saturdays, usually between 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

(2) The figures only include clinics that provide evening services from Monday to Friday. The consultation hours of these clinics are 6:00 pm-10:00 pm.

(3) Consultation hours are 9:00 am-1:00 pm on Sundays, and 9:00 am-1:00 pm and 2:00 pm-5:00 pm on public holidays.

Figure 3 — Usage of GOP services of HA

No. of attendances/ Clusters	2014-2015 ('000)	2018-2019 ('000)	Change
Hong Kong East	588	592	+ 1%
Hong Kong West	389	385	- 1%
Kowloon East	945	985	+ 4%
Kowloon Central	2 227 ⁽¹⁾	2 192 ⁽¹⁾	- 2%
Kowloon West			
New Territories East	946	1 033	+ 9%
New Territories West	810	871	+ 8%
Total	5 905	6 059	+ 3%

Note: (1) A number of hospitals and related healthcare services were re-delineated from the Kowloon West Cluster to the Kowloon Central Cluster with effect from 1 December 2016. As such, the figures of the two clusters are combined for comparison purpose.

Highlights

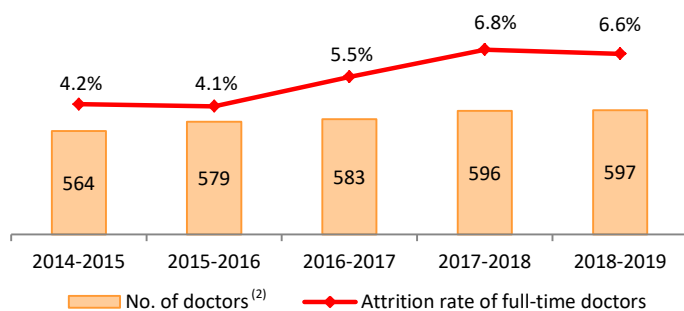
- Primary care is the first contact point of the healthcare system covering prevention and treatment of acute and chronic diseases, health promotion, health risk assessment, and self-management support. The primary care service system has been under growing pressure as a result of the increase in the proportion of the elderly population from 14.7% in 2014 to 17.0% in 2018. Also contributed was the much higher prevalence of chronic health conditions among the elderly, at 78.1% in 2018-2019, as against that of 31.1% for the total population (**Figure 1**).

- The Hospital Authority ("HA") has been offering primary care services through 73 general outpatient clinics ("GOPCs"), targeting primarily at the elderly, the low-income group and the chronically ill. However, only a small minority of GOPCs operate outside the usual opening hours (9:00 am-5:00 pm), on weekday evenings (6:00 pm-10:00 pm), Sunday mornings and public holidays (**Figure 2**). This, coupled with the limited provision of outpatient services in the private sector during Sundays and public holidays, adds to the concern about the limited provision of general outpatient ("GOP") services over the period. Indeed, part of the service demand might have been driven to the public accident and emergency ("A&E") departments of HA which offer 24-hour services. Reflecting this, 62% of the A&E attendances were semi-urgent and non-urgent cases in 2018-2019.

- The GOP services of HA are provided on a quota basis organized by hospital clusters. Total GOP attendances increased by a mere 3% between 2014-2015 and 2018-2019, amidst measures to increase service capacity through recruiting more staff and adding consultation quota during the winter influenza surge and long holidays. Higher increase was observed for the New Territories East, New Territories West and Kowloon East clusters, reflecting high demand for GOP services in these clusters (**Figure 3**).

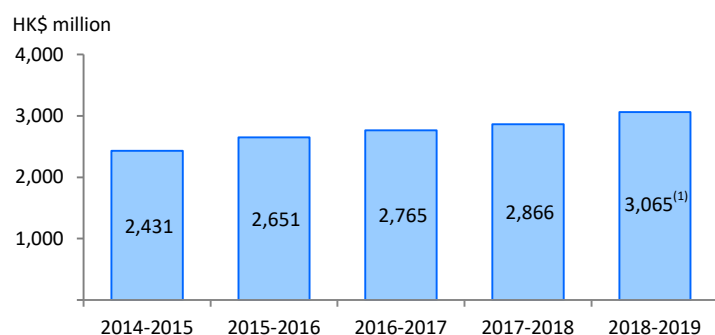
Public primary care services (cont'd)

Figure 4 — Doctors working in the family medicine specialty in HA⁽¹⁾



Notes: (1) The majority of doctors in the family medicine specialty work in GOPCs. Others provide services in the family medicine specialist clinics and HA staff clinics.
(2) The figures are calculated on full-time equivalent basis including permanent, contract and temporary staff in HA.

Figure 5 — Costs of operating GOPCs by HA



Note: (1) The figure refers to the revised estimate.

Figure 6 — GOPC PPP programme⁽¹⁾

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019
No. of participating patients	13 774	22 915	29 926 ⁽²⁾
No. of participating service providers	231	345	378 ⁽³⁾
Expenditure	HK\$29.3M ⁽⁴⁾	HK\$50.4M	HK\$73.1M ⁽⁵⁾

Notes: (1) Figures of the Tin Shui Wai Primary Care Partnership Project, which was launched in 2008 and migrated to the GOPC PPP programme in 2018, are included.
(2) The figure refers to planned instead of actual provision.
(3) Figure as at end-2018.
(4) "M" refers to "million".
(5) The figure refers to projected expenditure.

Highlights

- While there have been calls for increasing the service capacity of GOPCs to cope with the rising service demand, service capacity expansion has been restrained by the shortage of manpower in HA. Between 2014-2015 and 2018-2019, the number of doctors working in the family medicine specialty in HA increased by 6%, lower than the overall increase of 9% for HA as a whole. However, the attrition rate of full-time doctors working in the family medicine specialty increased to 6.6% in 2018-2019 (**Figure 4**).
- The costs of operating GOPCs amounted to HK\$3,065 million in 2018-2019, accounting for about 5% of the total operating expenditure of the hospital clusters (**Figure 5**). The average annual rate of operating cost increase stood at 6.5% between 2014-2015 and 2018-2019, generally in line with that of total operating expenditure of the hospital clusters (7.6%).
- In order to alleviate the service demand pressure on GOPCs and provide choices to patients, HA has implemented the GOPC public-private partnership ("PPP") programme since 2014. The programme subsidizes clinically stable patients having hypertension and/or diabetes mellitus to seek up to 10 medical consultations in a year with the participating private primary care service providers. With the gradual roll out of the programme to all 18 districts, the numbers of participating patients and service providers increased visibly between 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 (**Figure 6**).
- To further enhance district-based primary healthcare services, the Government launched the first district health centre ("DHC") in Kwai Tsing in September 2019, adopting public-private partnership and medical-social collaboration in service provision. The Government has planned to set up DHCs in six other districts within the current-term government and roll out to all districts in the future.

Data sources: Latest figures from Census and Statistics Department, Food and Health Bureau and Hospital Authority.

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