

**For Information
on 13 June 2011**

Legislative Council Panel on Health Services

Improvement on Joint Replacement Surgeries in the Hospital Authority

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the initiative of the Hospital Authority (HA) to improve joint replacement surgeries to cope with the rising service demand.

BACKGROUND

2. Amidst the ageing population and increase in life expectancy, degenerative diseases are common conditions affecting the elderly population. One of the major conditions is Osteoarthritis that leads to pain and loss of function commonly seen in knees and hips. According to the estimation by the World Health Organization, Osteoarthritis affects 20% to 40% of the elderly aged over 60 globally. The pain and physical disability also affect patients' social functioning and mental health and in turn affect their quality of life.

3. Joint replacement surgery can provide effective relief when conservative treatment fails. With advancement in medical science and technology, the improved clinical outcome of joint replacement surgery can also enable the elders to adopt a more active lifestyle. The most common types of joint replacement are hip and knee replacements.

4. The demand for joint replacement surgeries has been increasing as a result of the ageing population of Hong Kong. The waiting list for joint replacement surgeries has been growing as the annual throughput for joint replacement surgeries has been lower than the growth of new demand each year. In 2009-10, HA's throughput was 2 017 operations while the number of new cases for the year was about 2 300. As at end 2009-10, the number of patients on the waiting list was about 5 100 while the notional waiting time was about 33 months.

MEASURES TO ADDRESS THE SERVICE GAP

5. To meet the growing service demand, HA has allocated an additional funding of \$42 million to establish a joint replacement centre in the Hong Kong Buddhist Hospital (HKBH) under the Kowloon Central cluster in 2010-11. The centre in HKBH has commenced service since 15 December 2010 and has performed 103 operations as of 31 March 2011. This coupled with the growth in service throughput in other hospitals has increased the total number of joint replacement surgeries conducted in HA from 2 017 in 2009-10 to 2 268 in 2010-11, representing a rise by 12%. The centre in HKBH is expected to provide a total of 750 surgeries each year from 2011-12.

6. To further enhance HA's service capacity for joint replacement surgeries, HA has earmarked \$32 million in 2011-12 for the establishment of another joint replacement centre in the Yan Chai Hospital (YCH) under the Kowloon West cluster. This new joint replacement centre is planned to be commissioned in October 2011 and is expected to provide 400 additional joint replacement surgeries each year starting from 2012-13.

7. To cope with the enhancement in service, additional manpower of doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers and other supporting technical staff will be provided at the two joint replacement centres.

8. Both the joint replacement centres at HKBH and YCH provide one-stop service to patients, including pre-operative care, integrated surgical treatment, post-operative care and comprehensive rehabilitation. Such arrangement will not only shorten the patients' length of stay in hospitals, but also bring convenience to patients and improvement on clinical outcome.

9. With the additional throughput from the two joint replacement centres, and the increased throughput of other hospitals, the total number of joint replacement surgeries to be performed in HA hospitals will increase to about 3 300 in 2012-13.

WAY FORWARD

10. HA will continue to monitor the service demand and service provision of the two joint replacement centres. It will take into account the effectiveness of the two joint replacement centres in planning and development of joint replacement service in future.

ADVICE SOUGHT

11. Members are invited to note the content of the paper.

Food and Health Bureau
Hospital Authority
June 2011