

The Integrated Maternal and Child Wellness Hub (IMCWH) at SingHealth Polyclinics (SHP) - Punggol

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Well-child visits enable healthcare providers to perform comprehensive assessments for children, institute preventative care, and promote good health. In Singapore, regional public primary healthcare clinics (called “polyclinics”) provide this service, following a recommended schedule. Problems identified during such visits allow for early intervention and anticipatory or preventative actions to be taken. The IMCWH at SHP-Punggol is a pilot programme with KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital, aiming to improve the current well-child visits through 4 key areas. First is an Enhanced Developmental Screening (EDS) at 9, 18 and 30 months, using additional screening tools (PEDS, PEDS:DM, M-CHAT and ASQ). Second is Postnatal Depression Screening. The third is Nutrition and Growth, while the fourth is Parenting Education. The programme adopts a 2-tiered approach, helmed by a team of trained primary care nurses and doctors, with specialist and allied health support. Further management was recommended accordingly to those who screened positive. From July 2019 to April 2020, 137 of 2828 children (4.8%) who underwent the EDS were screened positive for developmental delays. 94 of 993 (9.5%) 18-month olds were found to have a body mass index (BMI) >90th percentile, while 48 of 1963 (2.4%) mothers were screened positive for post-natal depression. The 18-month touch-point for EDS had the highest pick-up rate (10%) for developmental delays. The number of referrals to a Child Development Unit among those aged 1 to 2 years was nearly twice compared to before the programme started (6% vs 3.5%) and twice that of other SHP clinics without this programme (6% vs 3%). While a higher referral rate may appear to be a positive result for this pilot, more time is needed to observe if this translates to higher numbers receiving intervention as there is a lag time to specialist clinic appointments, whose operations have also been disrupted by COVID-19.