

# United Efforts of Medical Personnel

**Dr. Chiau-Suong Liao, Head of Hematology,  
Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital**



One Wednesday morning, I arrived at the ward getting ready to start the weekly ward-round with the medical resident. Suddenly, an emergency was broadcasted over the air - "Patient in room number xx needs CPR." I, with the resident, immediately rushed to the scene.

Some nurses were already at the bedside, setting up resuscitation board and doing chest compression and ambu bagging. The defibrillator and ECG monitor were soon ready, which showed absence of heartbeats. The resident quickly finished the endotracheal intubation while the respiratory therapist with the respirator machine was on standby. The patient was injected with resuscitation medicine one after another. Chest compression continued by doctors and the nurse practitioners. The room was full of people and the emergency

equipments.

There were many people involved but it was an orderly chaos. Everyone is well prepared for this kind of emergency so they worked diligently in the crisis. The patient was a 30 years old female suffering from lupus erythematosus and chronic heart failure. The patient's relative, who is also on the staff of the hospital, was with her for the emergency treatment. After about an hour, all emergency measures failed and the patient was declared dead.

The scene of the above medical emergency is common in a mid to large size hospital. Medical personnel are the health guardians of patients. They provide diagnosis and treatment of various illnesses and to relief the patients' suffering. In particular, more attention is given to patients with severe illness. When dealing with sudden incidents, every second counts so the teams are there trying to save the patients' lives.

Medicine is team work. Doctors are responsible for diagnosis and treatment while other medical personnel cooperate with the process. Each patient is important to them like a family member, together, they assure the best possible care. The treatment process involves a wide range of specialties with in house patients usually having more complexity. Therefore, a strong nursing

team is equally important along with a dedicated staff of doctors.

Nursing is hard work because the care is 24 hours non-stop. Many are assigned to graveyard shifts when everyone else is asleep. I am grateful and admire their work ethics. The nurses are always on the front line. They are the first to notice any changes in the patients' conditions. Their attentiveness and alertness enable them to detect such minute changes which might be life threatening. Their kindness and merits are beyond description.

Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital is a relatively young hospital as it entered its fifth anniversary. All doctors and nursing staffs are younger than most other hospitals. The age advantage is the energy level and the motivation for advanced learning. The disadvantage is the lack of experience so they must continue further education. It has been four years since I transferred from the National Taiwan University Hospital (NTUH) to Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital. There is a strong sense of vibrancy about this new hospital. Experience can be accumulated and obtained by various methods. For example, sharing of personal experiences among colleagues, cases discussion, lectures and educational seminars, and medical literatures are very helpful. We hope that any imperfect procedure will only



**Professor Chiau-Suong Liao reminds nursing staff to constantly be improving in order to have the adequate ability dealing with many and complicated illnesses; and to give the patient the best care.**

happen once. Each bad experience should be shared so it won't be repeated. This is to advance the medicine for a common cause.

The hospital has many specialty departments. News of the success spread by word of mouth, many patients with various complicated and severe illnesses come to the hospital for treatment. Therefore, all medical staff must continue to improve themselves to deal with the challenge. As for doctors, there are different types of educational training and case discussion conferences, including general and various specialized subjects. Everyone can improve daily. Nursing care training typically takes place during the ward's morning meeting. There are also several other specialized training lessons.

Our hospital's goal is to give patients the best possible care so they don't stay home or have to wait at the emergency room for a bed. Therefore, we allow patients with different illnesses to stay in the ward that is not specialized in that particular disease or illness due to a lack of hospital beds. We are concerned that this might result in a deviation from the standard medical care. I think we can consider rotation of the nursing staff to other specialized wards so they can be cross trained in other specialty operations. This is called perfection.

With constantly advancing of our doctors and nursing colleagues and working together, it would improve our overall quality in medical treatment and caring.

# Gentleness with Persistence of Nurses

**Dr. Shin-Yuan Chen, Neurosurgeon, Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital**



What do nurses do? I can't say I know for sure as their roles vary throughout the different stages of my life.

When I was a kid, I saw “nurses” as smiling, patient, comforting and helpful professionals with tremendous amounts of good qualities. After I became a resident doctor, nurses not only held the above qualities, they also had endless work to complete and countless records to file. They were often under stress and understandably edgy. Their pristine white uniforms were often stained with other colors from patients' conditions: Red from blood, brown or black from gastric hemorrhaging, green from gall and yellow from urine or vomits of drunken patients. I often questioned what other kind of professionals would allow themselves to



**Dr. Shin-Yuan Chen(middle) has been a doctor for more than twenty years. Through his eyes, his nurse partners are young and passionate. Though their work in different departments can be quite different, they maintain the same professional attitude in patient care.**

bear such discomfort.

During my residency at the hospital, I couldn't call nurses "older sisters" as some of them were younger than I was (though they might look older). It would also be odd to call them younger sisters. The most stunning experience was when I requested a nurse for help by the hospital bed and a guy showed up. At that moment, I realized that even if they were only a small percentage of the overall staff, "Nightingales"(Chinese translation after Ms. Nightingale, what nurses usually being called) could be males. Though they were minorities in this profession, they did the same work of monitoring patient's blood

pressure, heartbeat, body temperature, administering medicine, changing medicine and bed sheets, etc. Even though they all graduated from nursing schools, they could end up working in different departments such as surgery, emergency rooms, ICU, anesthesiology, inpatient or outpatient services. They were very versatile professionals.

Out of the medical office, they became different people. I could hardly recognize them when I ran into them on the street. They could be a responsible parent, a respectable teacher or a hard working student. Once they put on the nurse uniform, they transformed into professional nurses. They were true



**A good nurse could always win his/her patient's trust. In return, he/she would work harder to devote him/herself to the profession.**

“Transformers.” It might be confusing to bystanders but it seems so natural to them.

The years passed by quickly. After being a doctor for more than twenty years, I found myself doing less as I grew older while nurses still carried the same workload. Most interestingly, they looked the same with no signs of aging at all. They still looked like they were in their twenties! Their uniforms were still colorful. It was probably their devotion that kept them young because their working environment had not been perfect with high turnover rates. If you treated nursing as a job then even Angels would cry. Nurses had three shifts daily and didn't even have time

to use their accrued vacation hours. How could anyone be a nurse for a long time?

Nevertheless, when I saw off duty nurses used their free time to feed elderly or homeless patients, carry young patients, comfort them while helping other patients simultaneously, I realized that it was not just a job but the altruistic devotion that motivated nurses so they didn't distinguish between on duty or off duty hours. They just wanted to help patients even if it meant cleaning up their filth. Nurses were on a mission where they found joy and comfort.

So I always found myself gaining new insight about nurses everyday.

# Cooperation to Better Patients' Kidney Condition

**Dr. Yi-Hsin Chen, Department of Nephrology, Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital**

The overall atmosphere of the Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital's hemodialysis room has an aura of warmth because of their friendly, cheerful and helpful nurses. "Patient-oriented" is the culture of Tzu Chi Hospital. Nurses patiently assist all patients with personal respect, comforting, and intimate interaction. Besides, patients are encouraged to bond with other patients, sharing their own experiences and creating a relationship with love among them.

Besides taking care of 150 in-patients with hemodialysis, 32 patients with peritoneal dialysis, nurses also keep themselves busy with out-patient services and serious cases that require surgeries.

Most new kidney dialysis patients and family members often are confused with medical jargon but nurses are able to explain in simple ways understandable to patients. Therefore, patients not only understand the dialysis procedures but aspects like continuing care, living condition, and diet. Nurses are extremely caring with their meticulous approach to

perform their daily duties in the hospital.

A-70-year-old elderly male patient shuttled to Taichung Tzu Chi General Hospital for regular kidney treatment left his prescribed medicine behind on the counter. One of the on-duty nurses discovered the medication. Without hesitation, she delivered the medicine to the patient's home after work. The elderly man was touched by her gracious action.

Dialysis patients visit the hospital several times a week. Each visit requires several hours, giving patients and nurses ample opportunities to develop close interaction. Nurses can spend more

quality time with patients by explaining the details of illness and proper diet.

One dialysis patient (retired fireman) complained about losing his balance with frequent tripping in his own home. The incident was reported immediately to doctor's on-duty. Neurologist discovered that 90% of this patient's carotid artery was clogged resulting in a minor stroke and immediate medication was given in order to prevent a major stroke.

Daily diets are crucial to dialysis patients; a slip in careless intake may cause unforeseen severe circumstances such as cardiac arrhythmia. For



Dr. Chen and nurses in Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital's Nephrology Dialysis room inquires about a patient's condition.





instance, banana and star fruits are forbidden to patients, it contains a high element of potassium. In the central region of Taiwan, most elderly from the Hakka ethnic group have communication problem with nurses, due to shyness. They tend to keep themselves quiet even though they have questions on their mind. A miss is as good as a mile, when problems might arise.

Another elderly man has gone for a blood test and discovered his blood had a high content of phosphate ions. In fact, nurses couldn't comprehend the situation whereby the elderly man was being diagnosed, but without sign of recovery. After an attentive conversation, the patient had not follow the prescription routine set by the doctor.

Since then, if nurses encountered any elderly patients with complications in understanding prescriptions, nurses will get the attention and assistance from immediate family members for taking care of daily medication.

Special thanks to senior nurses for their outstanding professionalism. They have been great assistants to doctors by solving medication complications encountered by patients occasionally. They perform their duties diligently and attentively with clear minds.

I am fortunate to work with a group of nurses in Taichung Hospital who are so dedicated to their daily duties by establishing good rapport among ourselves. We work together to have a better tomorrow.

# Ten Years of Mindful and Earnest

## Teamwork in Cardiac ICU, Dalin

Dr. Chih-Ta Lin, Director of Cardiac ICU, Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital

Time flies. It has been nearly 10 years since I started at the Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital. As the memories flash back before me, much of what happened during that time still feels like yesterday.

### **Starting from Scratch - 10 Years of Achievements and Overcoming Obstacles**

Ten years ago, right after a promotion to become the attending physician at the cardiology department of a medical center in northern Taiwan, I decided to return to the south and be near my family. At the recommendation of my department head to the then superintendent Chin-Lon Lin, I got a position at the Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital.

I was surprised during my first visit to the hospital. On the one hand, the hospital was still under construction; on



Chih-Ta Lin's (middle) well-wishing card to CCU Head Nurse Mei-Ling(2 to the left), CCU is growing everyday under your brilliant leadership! I wish you joy and happiness every single day!

the other hand, it was a huge hospital for a remote town like Dalin. Wearing safety hats, my wife and I were given a tour around the hospital by Superintendent Lin. As he pointed to the future locations of the Cardiac Care Unit (CCU), the Cardiac Catheterization Room, and other departments, we envisioned what the hospital would look like. At that time, I told myself what a great opportunity it was to be able to grow with a brand new hospital. So, with my natural adventurous instinct, I began working at this hospital in the middle of farmlands.

When the hospital first opened we had our full share of beginner's challenges. The central air system broke

down during a hot summer day, many patients couldn't bear the heat and asked to be discharged or transferred to another hospital. In another incident, the Emergency Room was short-handed and the internal medicine physicians had to step-in and help. Whatever the crisis, they were overcome one by one. Under the leaderships of then Superintendent Lin and the current superintendent, Dr. Sou-Hsin Chien, and with the dedication of the entire hospital staff, Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital has grown and flourished in its first decade, while earning the trust and respect of the community.

One of the major challenges we encountered in the last ten years was

the shortage of nursing staff. Despite ongoing recruitment effort, we had a constant turnover of existing staff. In order to deal with the severe shortage of nurses, hospital management even took patient beds out of service to reduce the workload of the available staff. Quite frankly, on top of being a demanding and stressful job, a nursing career usually requires shift rotations that are especially trying for those with young children at home. When work and family cannot mutually accommodate, one often chooses to leave the nursing profession. Thankfully, through hard work and the support of the hospital, we were able to gradually staff up and resume use of all the patient beds.

### **Quality Care Draws People Attention**

Upon recovery, most frequently the patients show gratitude toward the physicians, often showering them with gifts, flowers, and even large wall plaques of appreciation. In reality, a patient's road to recovery involves the teamwork of the entire hospital staff, particularly the tireless work of the "White Angels" – the nurses! They deserve a round of applause for their endless and selfless contributions in supporting the physicians.

Another common phenomenon at the hospital occurs when patients

becomes dissatisfied with the hospital or the medical care they received, the nurses are usually the ones to endure the complaints and emotional outbursts from the patients' or their families. Yet when their doctors show up, these anguished displays would vanish as if nothing had happened.

The nursing team also shoulders the responsibility of health education to the patients and their families, whether at the clinics or in the hospital wards. For example, the nurses must constantly remind patients with heart failure to drink less water and patients with coronary artery disease to avoid salty food. Unfortunately, these patients often are stubborn and short-tempered individuals who refuse to comply with the advice of our care providers. Whenever I make my rounds, I always hear nurses attentively reminding elderly patients to drink less water and sip slowly or cautioning them to eat less salt-pickled foods. These nurses take care of those elders like their own family, providing them with the most tender concern and watchful attention. Occasionally, I would overhear patients grumbling about the nurses' constant "nagging," but from their content expressions, I could tell that deep inside, they truly appreciate the genuine caring of the nurses.

I have also seen many patients express their gratitude to the nursing staff, as they are being discharged from



Working in Cardiac intensive care unit, the medical staff needs to be able to communicate well with families of ICU patients so that they won't worry for not seeing the patients.

the hospital. Every warm handshake or hug from them is great reward and encouragement to the nursing staff.

### **Joyously Serving As the Cornerstone of Good Health**

On the whole, nursing is a rather laborious yet low profile job. However, in the past decade, there have been many nurses who stood by their vows and commitment to serving the patients. A perfect example is Meiling, our head nurse at the CCU. Once a young and inexperienced graduate from nursing school, after ten years of intense practical experience she has now taken charge of the CCU nursing team, dedicating herself to ensure quality care

for the patients in the unit.

In the past, Dalin Tzu Chi was a place far away from the city, offering little to do after work for the hospital staff. Now, hospital leadership not only advocates but also facilitates fun activities for the staff to enjoy during leisure time. When members on the team are well adjusted physically and mentally, they are most productive and effective at work.

Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital had just reached its 10th anniversary. While the climate of the medical field is constantly changing and advancing, the natural beauty of Dalin has not changed, and neither has the full and firm commitment of our hospital care team to the complete well being of patients.



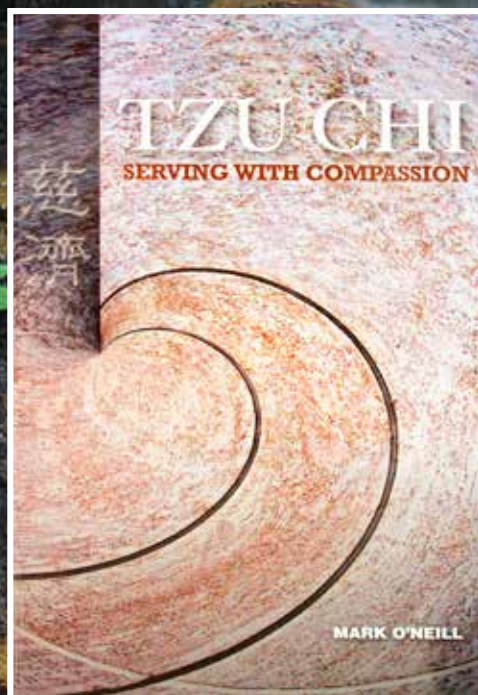
# TZU CHI

## SERVING WITH COMPASSION

This book tells the story of the largest NGO in the Chinese-speaking world, the Taiwan Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation.

Cheng Yen established the foundation in 1966, to help the poor and the sick. It has since grown to more than 10 million members in nearly 50 countries around the world, providing international relief and medical aid, running schools, hospitals and a university, the biggest marrow bank in Asia and an environmental effort involving more than 100,000 people.

It is the first Chinese charity to establish a global presence, on the principle that everyone, whatever their color, race or religion, is worthy of help.



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