

# A Sleepless Typhoon-Coming Night

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In the past few years working as the Director of Cardiology Ward, the more I interact with the nurses, the more I appreciate their hard work.

## **Humanistic Environment Benefits Both Nurses and Patients**

When I returned to work in Taiwan seventeen years ago, I was surprised by the nurses' disproportional workloads as compared to their ages. Florence Nightingale had expressed her opinion against young nurses. She pointed out that the nursing task in hospital requires mature mind and experience. It was not suitable for people who were too young. However, the insufficient resources for nursing and the crippled long-term care system were the reasons for losing experienced nurses. Young nurses recently graduated from the schools had to bear tremendous responsibilities working in the hospital. They often had to work laboriously to assist family members or caregivers with elderly patients' toileting needs. They also had to face the brutal facts of impermanence: birth, aging, illness, and death.



After taking over the Director of Cardiology Ward at Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, Dr. Yu-Chih Chen grew a deeper appreciation towards nurses' hard works. He became more considerate for his nursing colleagues.

In recent years, the deterioration of Taiwan's medical system had become an increasingly serious problem. Due to the shortage of nurses, many hospitals had to close down wards or keep a long waiting list on emergency observation wards. To assess nurses' working conditions, we often calculated the nurse-to-patient ratio (the average number of patients each nurse has to take care of). However, we had neglected the fact that patient care is teamwork. In the United States hospitals, patients received high-quality care through the monitoring and collaboration of the nursing team. There are CNAs (Certified Nursing Assistants) who take patients' pulses, temperatures, and responsible for other basic nursing care. There are LVNs/

LPNs (Licensed Vocational/Practical Nurses, equivalent to nurses in Taiwan) who provide basic nursing technical work such as dressing the wounds, giving injections, and administering the medications under the guidance of RNs (Registered Nurses). And the RNs are responsible for developing the nursing plans of care, supervising and guiding the LPNs, as well as in charge of the case analysis and assessments.

The patient's prognosis is primarily determined by a good nursing plan of care and the teamwork, rather than the individual physician. Since Taiwan's National Health Insurance has already provided its citizens' basic medical needs, the challenge lies ahead of us is how to improve the quality of medical care. For we all will become old one

Dr. Yu-Chih Chen not only provided timely advice to novice nurses, but also helped them to build their confidence.



day, the day that we or our parents need the medical care from the hospital will certainly come.

### **The Young Nurse in the Typhoon Night: The Hope for the Future**

One midnight of early August 2014, Typhoon Matmo hit Taiwan. I was going to enjoy a cup of hot coffee in my warm home and continue to work on my documents. Unfortunately, the phone rang. A newly admitted patient had fainted due to arrhythmia and needed an emergency pacemaker placement.

When I went out, a typhoon had just landed. The five-minute drive to the hospital felt like going through a different world. I fetched the pacemaker battery

and pacing leads from the Cardiac Catheterization Lab and head to the MICU (Medical Intensive Care Unit). Waiting at the bedside was a young nurse who I had never met. Recently, I have seen so many nursing colleagues come and go. I thought that this nurse who came to help was probably inexperienced with pacemakers.

Having to be on duty in the ICU late during the night of the Typhoon, the heart of the young nurse must be lonely. At such a young age, she not only had to work during the typhoon but also had to face a complex surgical procedure. Her mood must be very frightened. Sometimes when the doctor is in bad mood, they have to pretend to be strong to endure the task. Meanwhile, a senior nurse from the next bed came to help.

She must feel relieved. I remembered when I was on duty at the beginning of my career; I was looking forward to work with an experienced nurse. Seventeen years later, I thought that novice nurse must like to work with a senior physician .

We started the surgery immediately. It was unexpectedly smooth. The seemingly young nurse opened the sterile drape skillfully and handed me the anesthesia needle. After the local anesthetic injection, we looked for the venous site. With just one attempt, we were able to feed the pacing lead into the heart. I thought that young nurses are always energetic and eager to learn. Though it was late at night, I explained to her in details how to adjust the pacemaker. We were all relieved after the pacemaker operated smoothly. The patient was revived again. After experiencing the patient's life and death thrilling situation, the impact of

impermanence on the young nurse must be tremendous! Fortunately, this is a successful collaboration of the doctor and nurses. After our working together to place the pacemaker, the patient should be able to make it through this typhoon-night crisis till the morning. Together, we disinfected the wound and covered the insertion site. Everything came together so perfectly. I went home happily, left the young nurse in the ICU to fulfill her night-shift duty.

As a society undergoes the trend of aging population and low fertility, the need for a nursing team in the hospital continues to increase. As a veteran physician, I trust the on-duty nursing partners. Whenever I see a young nurse who is eager to learn, there is hope for the future. Here I want to cheer my nursing colleagues because I believe their love and persistence will make them feel the value of their jobs.

**The Heart Reviving Team in the eastern Taiwan:  
saving lives round-the-clock non-stop.**

