



Cure
Wounds

A Profile of **Chin-Min Wang,**
Wound and Ostomy Care Nurse,
Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital

& Relieve
Worries

By the Public Relations Office of the Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital

It is nine o'clock in the morning. Chin-Min, wearing a mask and space suit, enters the respiration care ward on the 6th floor. She lowers her body and gently greets the patient, "Mister, I am here to change the bandage!" She then started to work on his wounded hand. This is an old man with half of his skull sunk in from his cancer surgery. There is no skin covering his right cheek and ear, and there is a bulging tumor under his right eye. His face looks distorted and he can not talk. Chin-Min is not afraid at all. She diligently cleans every part of each wound and carefully removes the excessive tissue grown from the cut and while doing so, asks whether the old man has any discomfort.

The whole caring process is trivial and time-consuming. Chin-Min is surrounded by several interns. Chin-Min explains the procedure in detail while tending to the patient as well as taking care of his family members. Chin-Min learns that the old man's mother can not lift him so she volunteers to rub his body clean. Chin-Min says: "Grandma is so slim and weak. The job is simply too difficult for her. I just want to help." In this small ward, Chin-Min's figure moves back and forth.....

Tending to the Pain, Easing the Suffering

Being a nurse for wound and ostomy care, Chin-Min is busy traveling from floor to floor, as well as working in the intensive care unit. In spite of that, she enjoys her work. Every morning at 9 o'clock, Chin-Min takes her nursing tools and visits nursing stations on different floors to care for patients and perform her work. Her light figure is like an angel and her attentive care alleviates the pain of the patients. Wound and ostomy care is a special, independent nursing profession. The main targets are patients with special wounds or ostomy (the artificial body opening for body wastes). While also having to pay attention to the needs of the patient, caring for an ostomy and a wound may be time-consuming. "I think the profession is very unique in that we could help the patient and also alleviate their worries." Chin-Min could always see the patients' struggles and anxieties. She must take into account the procedures for caring for wounds. On the other hand, she understands that the patients would like to have the procedure be done as quickly as possible. Therefore, she is always treating patients



Although the wound caring procedure is lengthy and trivial, Chin-Min's patience and carefulness have brought her the trust of the patients and their family. They are like a family together.

patiently and trying to reduce their discomfort. Being able to pay close attention to the patients' feelings and needs, and being able to sincerely care for them, comes from Chin-Min's own personal experience of facing serious illness. Switching from patient to nurse has brought the determination to continue her career as a nurse.

Overcome a Sudden Misfortune with Great Love

"It was a turn-around of life!" said Chin-Min, heavily. Four years ago, she was diagnosed with breast cancer at the Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital. Suddenly, she turned from a nurse into a patient. Besides feeling shocked, she had also felt lost. After the diagnosis and before accepting it as a fact, she wanted to give up treatment. "It was a struggle at this turning point. When I had to face it, I chose not to face it and thought to just let it be..." However, her deep relationship with her family and the concern of her colleagues forced her to face reality. She put aside her love for nursing and went back home to recover. Although she was reluctant to break away from her nursing career, she

was convinced that the best way to move forward is to give up what you have when facing changes.

The love from her mother was the biggest support for Chin-Min. She not only took care of Chin-Min's body, but also encouraged her to return to nursing. Her mother moved in with her when she first started working at the Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital right after recovering from the illness. Chin-Min wipes away tears and is unable to speak when talking about how important her mother is to her. "I am the luckiest person in the world to be my mother's daughter." In her mind, her relationship with her mother is like the statue of the mother holding her child standing under the Bodhi tree outside of the hospital. No matter how hard the rain and wind is, the mother always stands strong and opens her arms to hug her beloved child. After the illness, Chin-Min's heart is no longer closed to her mother. Now she would discuss anything with her mother and could express "I love you" freely to her mother. Sometimes she would even ask her mother to guess what was in her mind!

Chin-Min says her father used to take care of her mother. Now her mother stays with her. She is happy that she could learn more about her mother's health condition and take care of her. Her father still lives in Kaohsiung. The family gathers together in Dalin whenever there is time. Chin-Min says she used to be a "nomad." Her experiences and struggles with the illness have established a strong tie between her and her family.

Had Been a Patient Made Her More patient

Because of the recommendation of the doctors and the director, Chin-Min re-started her nurse career at the Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital after the illness. Coming to a new environment, Chin-Min's mind was filled with insecurity and low self-esteem. She was afraid that her appearance after the chemotherapy and her less flexible hands would be subjected to others' eyes. In spite of that, she tried to change her perspective and adapt to the environment.

Having had cancer and gone through chemotherapy herself, Chin-Min had a vivid experience of switching the roles between the patient and the caregiver. She takes care of the patients with empathy. "Taking



care of patients comes naturally. It is almost like taking care of yourself.” Chin-Min says she notices the difference after having been taken care of by others. She used to ask patients to drink water; however, when it was her turn to be the patient, she realized how hard it was to drink the water. One needs much help from others to complete the task.

Chin-Min can feel the pain of the patients, which gives her strength to continue her mission as a nurse with compassion. Chin-Min understands how uncomfortable it is for the patients to be in a foreign environment and to be stared at by others. They would close their heart when experiencing pain and feeling insecure. They need space and time to adapt. Hence, she would stay by the patient quietly. She believes the patient does not mean any harm even when they refuse to communicate. It just takes time to straighten their thoughts. Chin-Min treasures her time and memories with the patients. Whenever she thinks about the past, Chin-Min’s face fills with smile and contentedness. The one she remembers the most is a colon cancer patient, an old lady with colon ostomy. Her hospital stay was extended because of poor recovery of an open wound. The old lady felt hopeless. She lay on the bed, closed her eyes, and refused to communicate with Chin-Min. Chin-Min felt sorry for her. However, she thought the best way was not to force her, but let her feel more comfortable. The two started as strangers, and slowly, became acquainted. When the old lady finally opened her mouth and called “Chin-Min,” Chin-Min was extremely happy. She says, “When I heard the old lady call my name, I was so happy! I felt that she had finally accepted me as part of her life!” She thinks this is the most rewarding moment as a nurse.

Letting Go of Worries, Regaining Wisdom, and Fulfilling Dreams

Now, her favorite thing to do for the holidays is to volunteer for recycling to protect the planet. During the recycling, she learned to fill her heart with appreciation, and empty unnecessary thoughts built up in her heart. She thinks recycling not only benefits the planet, but it also helps her inner self. She learned to change her own perspective of her surroundings, to not collect cluttered thoughts, to try to be relaxed, and



Being a cancer survivor herself, Chin-Min Wang learned to take care of the patients as if she was treating herself.

to keep her mind clear and simple.

Four years after the chemotherapy, Chin-Min is about to survive her second risk period. She thinks the most important thing now is to manage a good life style. The illness has changed her. Chin-Min wishes to spend more time with her parents, which she did not do well in the past. She says, "I don't want to make my mother worry anymore!" For her job, she changed the way she used to be – stubborn and self-centered. She pays closer attention to the patients and understands their needs. She wishes to use her specialty to take care of patients. Due to the lack of a certificate program for a wound and ostomy care specialist, she would like to further her training when opportunity comes. Her dream is to study abroad, take the board exam, and become a licensed wound and ostomy care nurse. Her advice to incoming nurses is to take care of their own health before taking care of the patients. Whenever possible, don't forget to continue learning. If interested, become a wound and ostomy care nurse to be more helpful to patients.

Nursing by Heart After Personal Sickness

**By Hui-Yen Liao,
Vice Director of Nursing
Dept., Tzu Chi Hospital,
Dalin Branch**

I often said to my students and the new staff: "After working in the real world for a while, please constantly refer back to your 'original intent'. When taking care of a bed-ridden patient, ask yourself if you were the patient, how would you like to be treated?"

Every time I saw the long gaze from the students, I was touched because I knew they were paying attention.

Years passed, my students have grown up and became colleagues. However, when they are busy at work, they tend to forget the loving care and observation they are accustomed in order to finish the work on time.

One time my mother went to a renowned hospital for an X-ray. Unable to hold still because of her back pain, she was yelled at by the technician. I was stunned by her rude behavior. Only when I threatened to complain to her supervisor did the technician change her attitude. Does it have to be this way? Will she ever treat a patient as if she were her mother?

One has to be ill to experience suffering. Without experiencing illness of a loved one, one would not understand the agony and anxiety of the uncertainty. The following four stories are written by the nursing staff or their families about their real-life experience; how they became patients or families. They remind us to use empathy and care during the process of interacting with patients and families.

Working at the Tzu Chi Hospital, immersed in the Tzu Chi humanistic culture, there are many touching stories happened around us. I have received praises but also found to be deficient in some areas. "Work diligently, speak attentively, express sincerity, and don't forget to smile!" The Tzu Chi hospital is built on humanistic foundation. I sincerely hope all the medical and nursing personnel can be bodhisattva, hearing and curing the pain and suffering.

Learn from Poor Services

Yin-Chen Hsu, RN, Respiratory ICU, Tzu Chi Hospital, Dalin Branch

I am a nurse and also an expectant mother. I didn't choose the hospital that I work at for the delivery. Instead, I chose a celebrated hospital that is close to my parents-in-law as well as my husband's office.

Shocked by the Unprofessional Experience

With the symptoms of pre-labor, I went to the hospital one day before the expected date of delivery. I felt much discomfort because of my body and the crying from the other mothers. I know childbirth is an extremely painful process and I assume nurses are supposed to comfort the expectant mothers, but to my surprise the nurses working there are extremely inconsiderate. Not only do they not lower their volume, but they also giggle all the time doing trivial things such as deciding what food to order, and yelling when ice cream is available.

At the end of the painful day, not only was I not ready for labor, but I also



A bad experience at the maternity ward is a lasting reminder so Yin-Chen Hsu's will never forget the utmost sincerity and attentive care when attending patients.

developed symptoms such as dizziness, nausea, and vomiting. The doctor came and decided to deliver via cesarean section (C-section). What shocked me was not about the operation, but what I heard laying on the operating table. These terrified nurses in the delivery room had to ask the nurses in the pre-delivery room for the operating procedures. It really shocked

by what I observed. Delivering a baby is supposed to be a sacred event, but the doctor and the nurses were unprofessional and irresponsible, all the way until the end of operation! Luckily, baby and I were safe at the end.

In Retrospect – to Begin with “Heart”

This unpleasant experience made me re-evaluate my work. I work at a respiratory care ward where the patients depend on

ventilators to survive. Many are in coma, or can't communicate. We tend to forget our professionalism, for example, we talk loudly with each other without respecting the patients' right for quietness. When the roles rotate, I suddenly found that I had fallen into the blind spot of daily routine work -- that I forgot the most basic and fundamental principle of “enthusiasm” and “attentiveness”. After re-evaluated myself, I will begin my work from my “heart” and hope to provide the best service to the patients.

The Moment with Death

Li-Tzu Liu, RN, Palliative Care Ward, Tzu Chi Hospital, Dalin Branch

I have never ever experienced the “Life and death in a sudden” or “Miracle”. As an expectant mother, the discomfort started the afternoon of May 15th. That same night, I was administered into the emergency room and the fight for my life was just a beginning....

Pre-Labor with No Matching Symptoms; Continuous Belly Pain After the Deliver

When I was told by the doctor that my cervix had stretched to about four-finger wide and I needed to be administered into the hospital right away, I was really confused because there were no matching symptoms yet for the labor at all! After long inexplicable contractions and upper abdominal pain, the progression still did not reach the next stage thus the doctor decided a C-section was required immediately. On the morning of the May 16th, I finally gave birth to “Big Bear”, my

dear son.

“But why in the world was I still feeling stuffy and in pain?” The doctor told me my triglyceride levels had reached above 9000 and the subsequent consultations did not seem to help at all. Being short-tempered, I requested bowel movement injection and stool softener, followed by asking for N-G decompression and anal canal induction. I was hoping all my discomfort could be removed right away and was so angry with the doctor because he couldn’t make a simple decision.

Medical Aid in Critical Life Moment

The situation did not improved at all and had gotten even worse. At about 10 pm on the 17th, I had such severe respiratory problems that I didn’t think I would be able to live through the night. At



midnight, the doctor came and told me I had to transfer to ICU and needed to be on CVP. I was calm when I heard that jargon, but I had a strange feeling that those were the instruments that I use daily to take care of my patients. Now do I need to depend on those instruments to support my life? When I arrived at the ICU, the working personnel approached and surrounded me right away with all the routine works -- on A-line, on lead, change NRM, CVP, etc. Finally a CT scan diagnose indicated the culprit was “Pancreatitis” and an urgent surgery was needed immediately. Things flashed in my mind. I was afraid I was going to die. My family, my child, my friends..... I didn’t even have a will written down yet, there are too many things left to be finished.....If I could, and I would just get up and walk out of the surgery room. If only I could...

When I woke up, there were Endos (endotracheals) and three pig-tails connected to my body. My mind was blank and couldn’t think of anything. Visiting hours were the most joyful moments for me because many of my colleagues would come to accompany me and talk to me. I was thrilled when my colleagues presented me the poster they made with my son’s fortunate face. I sure hoped he would not grow up in a single parent family. Days passed and because of fluid trapped in

Li-Tzu Liu thought her laboring and delivery experience is a treacherous journey full of obstacles. She would cherish every moment at hand now.

my pleura, I had to have another pig-tail. It was really painful and I wished they could just do one thing to me -- just go ahead and knock me out. I waited for the doctor everyday and waited for the day I could be transferred out of the ICU, the waiting seemed to stretch every minute to an eternity while I was waiting...

On the May 27th, the CVP, TPN and the heavy pump equipment were finally removed. I began walking, but my legs were really weak. Luckily, my fellow colleagues came to my rescue. They helped massage my legs and assisted in my rehabilitation. Otherwise, the hospital might report on any accidental fall.

Love Others and Oneself – Be a Good Nurse and Mother

Looking back, it was a treacherous journey full of obstacles and barriers. I would express my deepest appreciation to the doctors, colleagues and supervisors, and all the volunteers who came to my assistance. The experience allows me to understand the patient's point of view. It does not matter how small a pig-tail, it is uncomfortable. It is critical to handle patients, who are in pain already, with gentle movement; turning or positioning with the most comfortable posture.

I need to regain my health as soon as possible to care for my child and the patients who are in need of care.



Early Came Gift

Yu-Wen Chen, Nurse Practitioner, Medical ICU, Dalin Branch

My first practical training lesson was at the Obstetrics and Gynecology department. I was excited but and scared when I put on the training uniform in the maternity ward. The patient was scheduled for a

surgery to remove a fibroid. For first time in my life I was in the surgery room, up close to observe septic sterilization, hand wash, and the well-coordinated disciplines between nurses and doctors. I almost contaminated the surgery platform because

of nervousness and stupidity.

Being an ICU nurse specialist and becoming a new mother, I learn to cope with taking care of a new life, though born prematurely.

I remember at the beginning stage of my pregnancy, the baby's ultra sound image caused a great deal of excitement, happiness as well as worries. I was happy of becoming a mother, but also worried about the delivery of a healthy baby. To be cautious, I seek medical advice and followed regular prenatal check up. My colleagues were extremely helpful, making sure no lifting of heavy materials nor bumping with the patients by any means. They even nick-named my baby "Niu Niu", which means "baby ox" since it was the Year of Ox in the Chinese Zodiac.

Premature Birth and a Tearful Mom

On the morning of the 25th week, I began to feel the pain. The experience with my colleagues signaled the beginning of labor. I called the nursing specialist who recommended an immediate emergency room service. After notifying my family, I walked over to the ER from my dorm and was admitted instantly. The next day, many of my colleagues came to visit. I joked about Niu Niu behaving like a bad boy. When I glanced at the instrument that monitors the baby's heart, I prayed for the baby to settle down.



Being a mother of a premature baby, Yu-Wen Chen becomes sympathetic and understanding of the pain and suffering of patients' family.

At night, the unexpected contraction broke the silence in the room, and caused a moment of chaos in the ward. Niu Niu, weighting only 700 grams, arrived early into this world. Poor Niu Niu had to fight for his survival at the pediatrics ICU room. With family and friends besides me, I visited Niu Niu inside the ICU. Lying inside an incubator, Niu Niu's little body was covered with all kinds of tubing and instruments -- IV, nasogastric tubes, monitoring wires, airway and respirator. His little body was no bigger the size of my palm. I felt sorry for him. Tears started streaming down my face while I was watching.....

I stayed at the dormitory during the seven days critical period for Niu Niu. Then I moved in to my parents' home in Ping Tung in order to stay close to the hospital.

I shuttled numerous trips to the hospital. I call the hospital to follow up on Niu Niu condition if I could not make it in person. Every time I was making preparation for Niu Niu, it was another tearful lesson. I developed the postpartum depression.

Starts All Over Again

Niu Niu's PDA (patent ductus arteriosus) syndrome is often born with premature infant, Doctor Shou-Zhi Chang, Director of the pediatrics ICU, kept me informed closely with Niu Niu's day-to-day condition. The nurses not only took great care of Niu Niu, but also care about my feelings. They taught me many basic nursing techniques including how to feed and bathe the baby. Many would say those were quite simple that no one would spend time on learning, little did they understand the fear I had to overcome.

Although I am a nursing specialist, I have never cared for such a fragile living being, not to mention a prematurely born Niu Niu. Many of the tasks look simple but need to be done the proper way. During my first feeding experience with Niu Niu, I had to untie the nasogastric tube still inside of the Incubator. I held his little body and let him nipple at the milk, one after another. 20 cc of the milk seems like a long time. I was really stiff and did not have the rhyme. Gradually, I can take Niu Niu out of the incubator and I was making progress. The first time I bathed him, I was so scared. It

took me a great amount of effort to finish the bath even with assistance from my colleagues.

A Loving Mother Needs to Be Considerate for Others

Finally, Niu Niu was released from the hospital. I had more time with him, and to learn his mood and reaction. Because of my nursing background and hyper sensitivity, I made demands to the family members, for example, monitoring oxygen, blood oxygen saturation, heart beat, etc. Sometimes, I caused a great deal of discord in the family because of my demands and tone. Fortunately, my sympathetic husband was cooperative and often saved me from the verge of collapse. The fact that Niu Niu was improving, becoming less dependent on oxygen, and was able to take more milk was tremendous encouragement and hope for all of us.

It has been ten years since I started working at the nursing field. I can still recall the expectation when I just graduated from school and the thorough evaluation to finally settling in the severe disease field. Having experience the work of a new mother, I become more considerate and tolerate for the patients' family, whose burden and pain I truly feel because I can see things from their side.

From Heart to Heart

Chuen-Hui Lin, RN, Respiratory ICU, Dalin Branch



I have worked in the field of nursing for a few years and handle all kinds of patients' related problems, but I have never considered the patient's family as the target of care as well. It is often said the longer a nurse works, the more impersonal attitude they become. Ever since I started working at the respiratory ward, I discovered the relationship between patient's family and the medical staff is extremely well and friendly. The nursing chief reminds us frequently to spend time with patient's family to better understand their concern and for the sake of better service. In my mind, it sounds easy, but I do think that's really hard to do.

Learn a Real Lesson when My Father Is Hospitalized

Until one day my father was hospitalized because of pneumonia, I discovered I have neglected about the patient's family. I was nervous when my father was hospitalized, even afraid of hearing the phone ring for fear of bad news. I recall a patient's family

told me that one would not sleep well even if there was a single family member in the hospital. Now I share that same feeling. Due to the attentive care and encouragement from my colleagues, my father recovered well and I was able to report back to work.

Paying Attention to the Feeling

After going back to work, I take time talking to the family members. They treat me like friends and family and they tell me all kinds of stories about the patient.

There are different kinds of family members. Some are very apprehensive at our attitude, facial expression, gestures, and even the tone of voice. When the staff is busy attending patients, they often lose their friendly smile or becoming impatient. We often need help from other colleagues to intervene before it gets out of control. Patients need loving care so their families can rest their worries. Dr. Kuo-Sheng Fan has often told us psychology support to the patient's family is important so we can all work like one family.