

# LOSS of the Family

Written by Yu-Ru Li, Head Nurse, Emergency Room, Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital

*Our busy day  
begin with the siren of the ambulance...*

A patient who recently had a heart bypass surgery suffered with severe chest pain and shortness of breath. The patient felt ill just several days ago but he thought it was just a cold and didn't pay much attention. The symptoms became worse. He went to a small clinic first and was later transferred to our hospital.

We received a medical alert from the doctor; the team quickly found the related cause and gave the best care to the patient. As the monitor beeped steadily, the symptoms seemed to be improving, until suddenly the patient lost consciousness and his heart beat stopped. We inserted the Endotracheal tube, injected emergency medicine every three minutes, did ventricular fibrillation, electric shocks, and continuous CPR.

## **A Daughter's Call Couldn't Bring Back Her Father**

The family was anxiously waiting outside the emergency room. Some were nervously crossing their hands. It showed their worries and it made us sad. The

continuous treatment was the only hope to revive him. After over 30 minutes, the patient had not improved. The doctor took the family to see the patient and explained the procedures.

"Please try again. Try again. He was fine this morning. I told him not go see a doctor. Doctor, I beg you! Please, please..."

She called out her father's name repeatedly, asking him to wake up, to ride bikes with her again. She is seventeen years old, the daughter of the patient. I looked at her bright eyes as the doctor announced her father's death.

She said, "My father is not dead. He is coming home with me." Unlike other family members, she did not allow herself to drop a tear. I was concerned and felt for her. The child was blaming herself for scolding her father. The child was about to lose the most important family member but she forced herself to be strong. In fact, she should have been weak and needed a hug.

After telling other family members to pay more attention, I saw her father's body transported out of the emergency room. I could not help but to reach over and hold her hands to encourage her. That day, in some corner of a family, a loved one was lost, and the usual happiness turned into tragedy.

## Why This Would Have Happened?

As the sun was about to rise in the morning, an ambulance brought in a patient of OHCA (out-of-hospital cardiac arrest). The patient appeared stiff showing no sign of life. The heavy smell of charcoal was a partial indication. As I was outside the emergency room, I asked one of the family members who came along what had happened.

The middle age man was trembling and said, "There was an argument several days ago. This morning, we talked over the phone. After that, there was no sign of her. She did not come home after midnight...I requested police assistance. We searched a whole day...until now we found her car on the other side of the mountain. When I got there, she was like this already. I put her into the ambulance. I don't know why this happened..."

There was regret in his voice. He waited outside the emergency room with his hands shaking. There must be so much going on in his mind, so many regrets that he could have expressed. After the doctor explained, I was helping with the follow up matters. The child who came afterwards looked a little confused and sleepy. As the father walked up, hugged the child, time stopped. "Your mother is gone," the father said. Tears kept coming down after those words.

That night seemed to be longer. As I

looked at them, I could not help but grieved. What did the departed life take away from the emergency room? How much sorrow was left in that family? The value and meaning of life exists in that one thought. The one who can break through is the one with a brave heart. I hope this family can survive the challenges ahead of them.

## Life Changes But Goes On

Due to a job transfer years ago, I began working in the emergency room. The years have gone by so quickly. Every time when I looked at these lives being saved and lost, looked at how family members express their feelings, I realized that there is nothing worth complaining or fuss around. The most real value is the one in your own hand.

We often forget to slow down when we are in a hurry, or turn back to examine what the patient really needs. Sometimes, we forget the awe-stricken feeling when we first entered this profession. I wish the best for every person and every life that passes by. I also wish that I would gain strength through each life story so I can accomplish more tasks and responsibilities.



---

Every sad and happy incident occurs in the emergency room. It makes Yu-Ru Li treasure the value of life more. It also motivates her to be strong in order to accomplish more. The picture is Yu-Ru Li(right) attending the Nursing Management Training Session of Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital.