

10th Asia Pacific Hospice Conference

Sawadikap, Malaysia. I was fortunate enough to attend the 10th Asia Pacific Hospice Conference (APHC) on October 11-13, 2013 in Bangkok City—the land of smiles. This year, the theme of the conference was on “Integration and Harmony of Wisdom”. It was attended by people from all over the world. It is a blessing and joy to see all these people willing to journey so far from their own countries to participate and share their stories. Stories can be great and create happiness or it can be sad and tragic.

As everyone is aware, birth, aging, illness and death are the natural stages of human life. And it is quite natural to be afraid of death. But it is not just about dying, it is very much more about life, trying to live as well as we can, before the illness takes its course and leads to death. Therefore, health promotion for Good Death requires involvement of social activities such as creating decent thoughts about life and death, religious beliefs, development of palliative education, legal enforcement and public education, and support.

It has been reported that 7.6 million people die of cancer yearly and most of them have limited access to Palliative Care (PC). PC contributes to Good Death by covering physical, mental, social and spiritual dimensions. In the APHC, we were invited to listen to their stories. Indeed, it was very humbling to hear how each country developed their own wisdom in coping with their limitations to provide PC. The poor villagers in Africa with limited resources and access to health care were cared for by health care workers who have the wisdom to use shaved papaya to treat wounds (papaya is known to contain the papain enzyme which has antiseptic and anti-inflammatory capacities). It is used to remove dead tissues and improve healing of wounds.

In another part of the world, hospice health care workers rear rabbits as a source of food due to poor support and resources. These health care workers have the compassion, understanding and morality to provide for and



sustain the patients, leading to good death.

PC is not only about tears and mourning. We laughed and applauded when presenters from Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka vie with each other with their limited presentation time to share their tremendous achievement in providing PC to their people. They should be respected for they have to overcome many obstacles from political instability to socio-economic

issues to come this far.

Children were not left out as art and play were developed as a communication platform for them. Heart-warming stories were told. There were some tears in the beginning but laughter at the end. Children are innocent in their own unique way, but surprisingly, they can develop their own wisdom and we, as adults, can certainly learn from them.

Last but not least, PC is not all about anxiety, fear, sadness and death. Surprisingly and understandably, there should be humour in PC. Humour and laughter are part of human interactions. Combined with caring and sensitivity, humour is a powerful asset in PC. Humour can be from witticisms, teasing, and jokes. Occasionally, dark humour also can be used to poke fun at death and serious situations. Humour between patients, families, and even among staff, serve to build therapeutic relationships, relieve tension, protect dignity and a sense of self-worth, amongst others.

There were many more stories told but it will need many more pages to cover it all. We learnt that compassion is not enough. We need wisdom, empathy, knowledge and skill to be able to share emotions. Compassion is not a luxury but a necessity for our own well-being, resilience and survival. I will end with a Big Thank You to PPCS—“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

WONG SHAU MUN
Palliative Care Nurse

Paediatric Palliative Care Workshop

19-21 October 2013



Team with Godma



Szu, Yuin, Dr Ednin, Sumathy, Chandrika and Dr John



Home care student from East Malaysia



Sudanese palliative doctor with MD and Sumathy



The board behind Sumathy displays art work done by Hospis Malaysia Day paediatric patients

First of all, I would like to thank the PPCS Committee for giving me the opportunity to participate in this workshop. Paediatrics has always been an area that I would avoid as far as I can; it is too emotional and I feel inadequate to handle such a situation. However, attending this conference has now given me more confidence and reassurance to handle paed. *Confident* – because management is almost similar as for adults except for some differences in dosage of medications. *Reassured* – because I realized that it is not only me feeling inadequate. Paediatric Palliative Care is still very young in its existence and therefore minimal evidence is available for practice. So, it takes us back to the policy of “do no harm”.

This 2-day workshop was facilitated by our ‘Godmother’ – Dr Rosalie Shaw, Dr John Collins (from The Children Hospital at Westmead, Australia), Datuk Dr Kuan (Paediatric, Palliative Care Consultant, Malaysia), Dr Ednin Hamzah and Dr Sylvia McCarthy (Hospis Malaysia). It covered various topics in management of symptoms, dealing with difficult cases and establishing a comprehensive system of management where resources are limited. Sharing and discussions by participants from various states and countries were very encouraging and it made us realize how lucky we are. PPCS is definitely blessed with adequate resources and support and I truly hope to work towards better service and care.

Some of the applicable issues emphasized during the two days were:

- **Effective communication** – Communication is the most important base of making connection and staying connected. Skills and a right attitude will enhance communication and connection. Dignity conserving care comprises Right Attitude, Behaviour, Compassion and Dialogue. Various scenarios and encounters were discussed in managing difficult situations and how one’s attitude and skills will help in providing the best care.
- **Shuttle diplomacy** – I liked how Dr John used this new term to describe effective communication of palliative care with other disciplines. As we know, palliative care is never possible to be a one-man show. We definitely need a team approach within a group of experts in different fields to ensure best quality of life for our vulnerable patients. But how can we do this without getting connected and most importantly, staying connected? This is where shuttle diplomacy comes in. The role of the shuttle diplomat is to ensure that people of different specialties, areas of work, roles and levels of understanding can be connected in providing the best care with the same intention of achieving optimal comfort and reducing suffering among our shared patients.
- **Mind mapping** – It was truly astonishing to see how Dr Rosalie Shaw could teach two different things at a time. She taught us how to practise mind mapping while delivering her talk on ‘The dying phase’. The whole complicated dying process was explained precisely and methodically using ‘mind mapping’. That is our Godmother!

Lastly, I would like to share a little bit about our extraordinary journey. The “1 Malaysia Team” comprising of 1 Malay, 2 Indians and 2 Chinese travelled together in a closely seated plane with the only ‘thorn’ (Dato’ Ziau) being our pilot. The pilot’s patience and lenience on the road is extremely remarkable that made our voyage smooth without any jet lag. Our journey to KL was filled with conversations about our life outside PPCS. This was like an ice breaking activity which bonded us better.

In contrast, our journey back was filled with serious dialogue about what we learnt and how we are going to apply in our practice at PPCS. We all agreed that effective communication, efficient shuttle diplomacy within the team and with others involved in patient care will warrant better care and prevent unnecessary stress and burn out within the team. Some vital areas of improvement were discussed and I guess Dato’ Ziau will be our Shuttle Diplomat who will communicate and connect to whoever concerned towards achieving the PPCS mission of care... COMFORT, SYMPTOM RELIEF, ENHANCEMENT OF QUALITY OF LIFE and SUPPORT OF GRIEVING FAMILIES.

Thank you.

Reported by
Sumathy on behalf of the 1-Malaysia team

CHARITY FOOD FAIR

27 October 2013

October 27th heralded a new chapter for our food fair as it was our biggest effort yet in our new premises. We were apprehensive about the accessibility of our location and the resources available to put forward a larger scale food fair. We need not have worried as our volunteers stepped up to the game. Through sheer determination, they cajoled friends, friends of friends and family for food donation, cooked up a storm and sold coupons so quickly that we had to reprint within a week. We've even had to politely ask some of them to stop coupon sales for fear we would run out of food to sell.

Such is the power of volunteerism that we are humbled in the face of generosity and selflessness.

As the day approached, we contemplated different unorthodox methods including throwing an underwear on the roof to ward off the rainy spells that threatened to ruin the day. The birds were chirping that morning (Guddi's garden weather station report signaling a clear day) and the sun came out bright and early. I shall not endeavor to pursue the quiet suspect who might have executed the throwing act, but am glad the heavens were on our side.

By and by, the volunteers started pouring in. And so did the donors. The food was sold as quickly



as they appeared on the table. We couldn't replenish fast enough. There was a Punjabi corner manned by a group of ladies whose average age was 60 I guess? Trio Cafe, a Punjabi cafe, kindly spared a chef who whipped up a storm. Just fronting the entrance was our dedicated Halal section selling favorites like kueh pie tie, fried kway teow, nasi goreng, teh tarik, cakes and cookies. Further down the flank was an assortment of international goodies like chirashi sushi and Singapore laksa. Homemade marmalade, chicken pie, soya bean drink, satay, soya sauce, cooking oil, and Chinese dumplings were amongst the stalls and an assortment of household goods, plants and pots made a surprise appearance. We had a huge donation of fresh vegetables from a kind soul in Cameron Highlands which helped support our food sales. Although it was billed as a food fair, we managed to sneak in a mini jumble sale including our own patchwork gang's craftwork.

At the end of the day, PPCS is happy to report that a total of approximately RM48,000 was raised through this exercise, including donations received. Kudos to all the volunteers and donors. We are grateful for your support, without which our work would not be complete. Thank you.

Datin Lin Hui Yi

18 students from the Interact Club of SMK Raja Perempuan Ipoh volunteered to lend a helping hand – to set up the stalls and pack the scrumptious food to be sold. Before the event, on a Thursday afternoon, we went to the Perak Palliative Care Society for some briefing and to assess the place.

The public started to purchase a host of things sold like food, vegetables, clothes and groceries using coupons as early as 9 am in the morning. There were various finger-licking food being sold. The tantalizing and tempting aroma of food being cooked whetted the appetites of many hungry people who could be seen crowding around the stalls. Some people settled down to eat at makeshift tables while others preferred to take away their food. Despite the crowd, heat and sweat, all the committee members, staff, volunteers and students gave the best service possible with a big, bright smile on their faces. Everyone showed great camaraderie.

On the whole, people from all walks of life came to the fair to show their support in this fund raising activity. There was never a boring moment and we definitely had a blast on that day. We must always remember that one good turn deserves another. We never know when we would need help from others too!

Lee Su Xian, SMK Raja Perempuan Ipoh



DONATIONS received during October – December 2013

OCTOBER 2013	RM
Lim Wai Poh	200.00
Liew Siew Choong	200.00
Wong Wai Khum	100.00
Lim Pui San	500.00
Usha Rani a/p Veera Singham	100.00
Choo Yen-E	50.00
Logesvaran a/l Sangoo	50.00
Aishwarya Nair d/o Logesvaran	50.00
Lau Phoon Seng	100.00
Angie Ng & Friends	150.00
Azmah Bt Nordin	100.00
Foo Kar Yan	100.00
Dato Dr Chin Gan Ghee	5,020.00
Goh Guan Huat	100.00
Imo Aw Siew Ching	100.00
Anonymous	3,000.00
Tham Soo Sam	100.00
Kevin Ng Kim Hock	200.00
Rachael Chin Chiew Wai	750.00
Liam Been-Huey	150.00
Teh Soon Kam	100.00
Mdm Lee	260.00
Thong Sze Meei	200.00
Dr Lee Kim Seng	100.00
Victor Lee Kok Hee	1,000.00
United Plantations Berhad	3,000.00
Imo Chow Kong Hong	300.00
Imo J. Dhanaraj, PJK	100.00
Imo Teh Hok Leei	200.00
Datin Jenny Thong	500.00
Peter Lee Yee Tet	100.00
Lim Wye May	100.00
Joyce D'Oliviero	50.00
Anonymous	200.00
Choong Chok Woon	200.00
Dato Dr Madhuri Majumder	500.00
Gunasingam Nadarajah	100.00
Steven Eleno Cubinar	100.00
Soo Kwai Yoke	100.00
Lee Chun Weng	200.00
Tan Soo Tiang imo Tan Soo Neoi	1,000.00
Leong Wai Siew	200.00
Looi Lay Meng	100.00
Fong Poh Choo	500.00
Lau Look Mooi on behalf of Chen Nan Fang	500.00
Teoh Sow Fun	100.00
Ang Lee Chin	50.00
Mdm Nik	50.00
Ng Mei Lan	50.00
Adelina Ooi Gaik Bee	100.00
George	300.00
OMPH Line Dancers	100.00
Teow Hee Min	200.00
Kho Wei Gen	100.00
Ng Poh Wan	200.00
Soong Mei Kuen	50.00
Tan Chin Kheong	200.00
Fadzli Cheah Neurosurgery Sdn Bhd	1,000.00
Imo Lim Siah Chong	3,000.00
Ho Yin Mei	200.00
Ho Yit Lin	50.00
Khafri Alymann Kamarul Zaman	400.00
Heong Mun Bin	20.00

Miss Chew	20.00
Lim Chu Hai	100.00
Phan Tin Yee	100.00
Wong Kiang Shung	100.00
Ho Ah Ngen	100.00
Dato Poh Tak Kiau	12,663.00
Low Soon Siang	500.00
Alumni Politeknik Ungku Omar	1,000.00
Foong Pak Onn	200.00
Steven Wong	100.00
Tan Chew Weng	100.00
Mohd Roshazal	100.00
Lim Soon Kong imo Lim See Lin	100.00

NOVEMBER 2013	RM
Lim Wai Poh	50.00
Moh Mey Mei	100.00
Imo You Bar	120.00
Imo Jaikomary	620.00
Dr Lee Kim Seng (Kids First Sdn Bhd) imo Tai Yeow Kim	7,170.00
Siti Khadijah	100.00
Khor Hong Sean	100.00
Hush Trading	500.00
Lim Poo Ling	200.00
Lai Ming Hong	100.00
Siew Lai Ching	100.00
Buddhist Ci Shan Jie Yuan	500.00
Pay See Tiang	200.00
Lau Sook Mun	200.00
Hong Boon Wah	100.00
Yoon Siew Fai imo Chan Lin	200.00
Siew Kok Wai imo Siew Wei Hong	500.00
Mohd Shahabuddin	100.00
Cheng Kim Tai	100.00
Chai Kew	500.00
Khor Wooi Nah	100.00
Mak Swee Fun	100.00
Choong Chooi Mun	2,000.00
Chen Seok Chin	50.00
Imo Lau Bee Lay	60.00
Fong Moy Ching imo Chow Yut Foon	500.00
Ng Yit Loke	100.00
Wong Keng Ying imo Law Kew	500.00
The Late Wong Yoke Har	200.00
Hong Lam Company & S/B imo Terence Tan Kiet Lin	1,000.00
Low Ah Hur	100.00
Lau Sook Heng imo Low Fook Loy	500.00
Lau Mun Wai imo Low Fook Loy	500.00
Mak Chat Fong	100.00
Chuah Siew Ean imo Chuah Choon Wah	40.00
Wong Lai Pheng	30.00
Cheah Phi Shin & Family	80.00
Sherri Khoo Kim Ean	50.00
Wong Lai Har	10.00
Moh Ngan Yin	160.00
Yeow Jin Jie	1,000.00
Chan Kam Mong	100.00
Lim Foo Keiw	300.00
Lim Soon Kong imo Lim See Lin	100.00
Lim Soon Keat imo Lim See Lin	100.00

DECEMBER 2013	RM
Lim Wai Poh	50.00
FP Tyre & Auto Service	300.00

Ipoh Buddhist Dhamma Association	1,000.00
Chew Siew Fong	100.00
Choi Lim Fatt imo Choi Lok	1,000.00
Lim Sau Ying	300.00
Ho Voon Leong	500.00
Lim Hool Im imo Lau Phoon Seng	100.00
Mong Kai Mey	100.00
The Friends	350.00
Phang Siew Kin	100.00
Lee Seang Seng	2,500.00
Eow Yoke Khoon	2,500.00
Wong Seng	100.00
Mah Yib Yee	50.00
Ong Koon Heng	100.00
Imo Chong Fah	800.00
Imo Moh Ngan Yin	2,000.00
Irene Ho	380.00
Imo Ho Wai Choo	100.00
Ng Jin Shinn imo Ng Theng Chong	100.00
Sun Kheen Nam	100.00
Hong Boon Wah imo Teh Mee Ling	120.00
Lily Chew	2,000.00
Rohana Bt Mohd Nor	100.00
Tham Yot Seng imo Wong Kok Wah	100.00
Logesvaran a/l Sangoo	50.00
Chow Kiat Ing imo Chow Cha Ming @ Chow Chak Ming	500.00
Aishwarya Nair a/p Logesvaran	50.00
Choo Yen-E	50.00
Muhammad Syazwan B. Ahmad Radzuan	100.00
Loh Kah Kah	140.00
Hooi Yoke Heng	200.00
Kevin Ng Kim Hock	200.00
Yeoh Lam Ewe	100.00
Png Sin Aun	500.00
Loke Chee Mun imo Chung Siew Fah	11,000.00
Lee Lie Ching	50.00
Ng Swee Mun	2,000.00
Imo Leong Ah Moi	200.00
Leong Lye Wah	100.00
Cheah Pool Kwan	200.00
Looi Lay Meng	50.00
Lee Chee Kiong	200.00
Anonymous	2,000.00
Michael Dourado	50.00
Chong Li Han imo Au Siew Pheng	300.00
Loke Su-Yi	500.00
Phun Lee Lee imo Fan Loke Man	200.00
Imo Aw Siew Ching	100.00
Imo Soh Mang Sim	300.00
Chow Yoke Lin	100.00
Loke Khung	100.00
Ng Swee Kuen	100.00
Ng Kylie	10.00
Mong Siew Lean	100.00

(*imo = in memory of)



Thank-you
Promoting the
Spirit of Care