



# Give More Praise to Clinical Nurses

**By Tseng Kuo-Chih, Director of Department of Internal Medicine and Director of Gastroenterology Department, Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital**



I recall a time when a nursing colleague came to thank me during her departure from the hospital. At the time, I didn't understand why a person would thank me on the eve of departure, "What would she thank me for?" But then, I sat down and listened to her...

## **Provide Incomers a Bit More Encouragement to Create Team Harmony**

It turned out that she first joined the hospital two or three years ago as a new grad. She was often frustrated when caring for her patients. Fortunately, colleagues, nursing supervisors, and enthusiastic doctors shared with her their working experiences. She said that I was that doctor. "Had you not given me the encouragement, I might have left already."

Therefore, I believe that nursing colleagues

must be motivated, especially those who have just graduated from college. We should listen to their voices to create a harmonious and caring environment, and a good working atmosphere.

For example, there has to be mutual understanding and collaboration among the eight major cancers medical teams. For a doctor, the most critical and close cooperation is with the nursing colleagues. I remember when I was a resident doctor, I often took the initiative to help nurses. In addition to helping them grow, colleagues can learn from each other and foster building consensus. Treasuring the working relationship of nursing colleagues is one of the most important concepts in my medical career.

### **Nursing Colleagues Feedback in Time, Resulting in Quality Care**

We hope that patients will receive the best care, which cannot be achieved by doctors alone. This includes resident physicians, nurse practitioners, nursing staffs,



**Dr. Tseng Kuo-Chih of the Department of Internal Medicine of Dalin Tzu Chi Hospital (second from the right in the back row) mentioned that one of the most important concepts of medical treatment is to treasure nursing colleagues. The picture shows Dr. Tseng with the ward nurses and residents.**



and other functional teams. With the strength of a team, the quality of care will then be elevated. I often say to the young doctors, residents, or medical students that nursing professionals often help to develop physicians' professional growth. In particular, the nursing staff is critical because they are the first line of defense for patients' care, also providing doctors the best communication.

The nursing staff provides me the truth in all realistic situations and reminds me my negligence. For example, if a patient or family member complains, I can deal with it head-on and respond appropriately. Nursing staff provides patients their first line of defense; in fact, this reduces error rates. With a two-way communication among the practitioners, doctors receive timely feedback and patients the quality care.

### **The Natural Instinct to Help - a Demonstrated Strength**

One night during a typhoon two years ago, a mother and a son came to the clinic. Mom is seventy or eighty year-old and her middle-aged son is slightly cognitively handicapped. They arrived early by bus and waited quietly in the lobby. It was busy. By the time I attended to them, there were only a few patients left. As the storm approached that night, the hospital halted the shuttle service. The couple lives quite far away and the mom's anxiety increased. We learned that they are low-income family and must be worrying the cost of a taxi ride home. While I was pondering, I overheard a nurse said, "Auntie, please wait a moment. There are still one or two patients left. I can take your home afterward."

This incident highlighted the significance that interaction between people can be pure and natural; it is human nature to simply help each other. This kind of simplistic natural instinct exists among attending physicians, residents, and medical personnel. It is just that we are often hiding behind it for many reasons.

In that particular moment, I was touched. The nurse intuitively took the initiative to do such a thing. I benefited a lot from such a good experience. It was during the moment of medical treatment that we can set aside personal bias, profession and wealth. I saw the most intimate and sincere human nature to help other people.

If we can spare a few words, or an encouragement with a pat on the shoulder, such action can change a person's perspective. Whether it's my words of encouragement to a new nurse, or the nurse giving the mother and son couple a ride home, and encouragement to patients or family members, that perhaps at that moment, you've given the person the power to go forward.