

Uninterrupted Dialysis Treatment in Time of Crisis

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As result of the earthquake's devastation, the water towers of Huai-Te Hemodialysis Clinic, Lian-An Hemodialysis Clinic, and Hualien Hospital, which all located near the Marshal Hotel, had fallen, and the RO water processors were damaged.



HTCH arranged additional nursing staff and hospital beds to provide dialysis patients in Hualien with uninterrupted treatments.

“Acute or chronic, every life matters...” Deputy Director Wang Chih-Hsien of Internal Medicine, Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital (HTCH) shared on stage in the 2017(Chinese Lunar calendar) Tzu Chi Year-end Blessing Ceremony on Feb 10, 2018 that “the acute ones are important, but the chronic ones are as well. Hemodialyzed patients face life-threatening risks just three days without hemodialysis! After the earthquake on Feb 6, Dir. Hsu Bang-Gee of Nephrology was completely occupied with patients, and some of our staff worked 12-hour shifts. Everyone was engrossed in helping their patients, as well as their families and themselves, under extreme pressure. Once again, I would like to thank our dialysis team.”

The aftershocks were incessant throughout the eve of Feb 7. Sleeping was difficult. The dialysis care team of HTCH was on site early in the morning despite the lack of sleep. Besides attending to the patients of HTCH, the team also contacted nearby hospitals and clinics with dialysis equipment to see if any of them need a hand, and confirmed that Huai-Te Clinic, Lian-An Clinic, and Hualien Hospital require immediate assistance due to fallen equipment and damaged RO water system. HTCH began coordination by reassigning patients. In addition to the 54 beds, starting Feb 7, additional 8 to 11 beds were allocated depending on the situation to accommodate returning patients; on top of the 18 nursing staff in the dialysis room, another 4 nurses from



Hemodialysis Room Team Leader, Head Nurse Lin Hsin-Ying, Nephrology, HTCH is concerned with the condition of the dialysis patients.

Huai-Te Clinic joined the team to support daytime service.

Working in the Front Line

Hemodialysis Room Team Leader, Head Nurse Lin Hsin-Ying of Nephrology, HTCH, expressed her gratitude towards the four nurses from Huai-Te Clinic who came to their support, and their tremendous effort in keeping treatments uninterrupted.

Among the supporting nurses, senior registered nurse Hsia Chung-Yi, who had spent over two decades in this profession,

was married to a fireman. He was on site right after the earthquake. This couple were both aware of the concept of golden hour. They have two children, one of them was only 3 years old, had a fever at the night of the earthquake, and was among one of the many patients in the emergency room of HTCH. Fortunately, after careful diagnosis, the child was fine. Since the treatment of dialysis patients cannot be interrupted, Hsia Chung-Yi had to entrust both of her children to the care of her mother-in-law. Deputy Director Wang Chih-Hsien also mentioned that, “we talked to Chung-Yi afterwards and

learnt that her husband never returned home after the earthquake. We knew she was concerned, having her phone nearby while attending to patients. After every aftershock the phone would ring. Although I could not hear her son's voice, I could hear her, constantly reassuring her children, 'don't worry, mom is coming home this afternoon, just stay with grandma and be a good boy.' I believe that most people working in a hospital right now are experiencing the same dilemma."

On Feb 7, a day after the earthquake, the hemodialysis room of HTCH received

70 patient visits, and an additional 34 patient visits from other hospitals. On Feb 24, a total of roughly 900 patient visits were counted, including 142 patient visits from other community clinics. Hemodialysis Room Team Leader Lin Hsin-Ying reminded everyone that dialysis patients who cannot receive dialysis on time must pay attention to fluid intake, as excess fluid intake could lead to hydronephrosis or systemic edema and cause respiratory distress; furthermore any diet high in potassium could pose immediate threat to life. Routine dialysis is crucial, she added.



Senior registered nurse Hsia Chung-Yi, who had spent over two decades in this profession and is currently works at Huai-Te Dialysis Clinic, performs her duty in the time of crisis, helping other people and their families.