



So Proud of Our Rehabilitation Ward Nurses

By Sung Pi-Yu, Visiting doctor, Rehabilitation Dept., Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital



Today I would like to share the story of “A thousands faces of a nurse” – the nurses who work at the hospital ward 10C – our Rehabilitation Department. At ward 10C of Taichung Tzu Chi Hospital, all of the patients require some types of rehabilitation. These patients were diagnosed with stroke, spinal injury, brain damage, brain tumor, etc... These patients all had some handicap and or difficulty to move themselves around. Family members are always confused on how to take care of them. The patients also are prone to depression. Thus, teamwork is very important for this type of medical care. Nurses play an important role for the team.

Every day around the clock, nurses take care of patients in three shifts. Other than checking their vital signs, they deal with problems and questions from patients and their families. These questions span a wide spectrum including how to change diapers, feeding tube maintenance, moving and turning the patients, how to take care of the patients after they return home, like taking



bath, transportation, handicap handbook application, and how to help dress patients suffering with strokes...

There are a vast variety of tasks but nothing is impossible. These nurses spend numerous effort and time to learn the real-life skills which they were not taught in formal training. For example, moving and turning the patients, dressing up with only one hand, using a cane to walk; they also need to familiarize with long term care topics like supporting tools and supplies. Moreover, they spend a lot of their own time to assist patients undergoing physical therapy, and activities like the Christmas ginger bread houses or the Mid-Autumn festival. They could've used their spare time to finish their practical work and their administrative functions.

Why are they willing to do these chores? One nurse replied, "If a patient makes progress or feel happy, all our efforts are worthwhile." It's this selfless spirit that propels them to accompany patients with neurological disorders. Besides, moral and spiritual support is needed for patients in recovery.

Also, these nurses are like white angels supporting a vast medical team network. They know the conditions of patients as well as their family members, and are aware of the latter ability in taking care of the patients.



“Can you help me here? I want to help my mom turn.” A nurse quickly responded as soon as she heard the request. “First, roll up the blanket and place it behind the back. You can also place a pillow between the legs...” Then they taught them hands-on about caring like how to turn a patient, changing diaper, tube irrigation, and sputum collection. There are numerous tasks to take care patients recovering from strokes. Since most family members are not familiar with such nursing skills, nurses have to teach them little by little and hope patients will get good care after they return home. These tasks are not only complicate but required customization for the needs of individual patient, especially when there are cared by different family members or foreign helpers. Only they can understand the challenges for post recovery and long-term care.

“Teacher, how do I use this hand to pull my clothing up? How do I smoothly pull this over my head?” During the morning meeting, nurses from night and day shifts were concentrating on a training session by a professional therapist who demonstrated how to dress a stroke patient. After the demonstration, everyone was practicing with the own patients. This type of class is to help those nurses realize the difficulty and techniques when helping stroke patients. When they actually help patients the next time, this task will be easier to apply. Patients won’t feel alone and helpless because someone would support them and practice with them. This increases patients’ ability to be self-sufficient in the long run.

“Senior sister (the nurse practitioner), what type of rehabilitation exercises for this elderly patient should we choose?” The nurse pointed to the contents of a blue folder and asked the therapist politely. “You can let him and other patients come to the nurse station together to play a fish game.” Please don’t think we have a small fish ball with live fishes, it is children’s fishing game. Why play fishing game? It’s because the fishing game can help train hands’ movement and can help patients get together and encourage each other to build up friendship. How do we know who can work together? It would have to depend on the nurses who take care and observe them daily and know their conditions.

In order for patients to make friends for their long hospital stay, chatting with new friends are important for emotional support. Nurses would use the evening shifts to let patients play small games or activities such as: walking together, practicing standup, exercising to strengthen the rehabilitation, enriching the rehabilitation’s contents. Therefore, the relationships are close between patients and nurses.



“Aunty, there is a contest for decorating the pomelos! Will you come and give us one pomelo to decorate? We will vote for the best decorated one later.” The decoration of pomelos was about to begin. Those who participated at the contest would always look at the board to find out how many votes they had received whenever they passed by the nurse station. As we moved closer to the deadline, everyone was getting nervous. The success of this activity for the festival lied on the nursing staff. Not only did they need to encourage the patients to participate for the contest, but also helped the patients decorate the pomelos. During the process of the contest, the nurses would try to involve everyone having fun. They also would console those who did not win the contest.

Nurses play many roles in our department, and everyone is a great performer. As a Rehabilitation Practitioner, I am very proud of our nurses.