



Hualien

Taiwan Palliative Care Conference
Improving the quality of end-of-
life care

December 23, 2020

The dignity of life is not only about “life” but also about “death”; we may not be able to choose how to come into this world, but we can choose how to leave. On December 19, 2020, the palliative care teams from Taipei Veterans General Hospital, Taipei City United Hospital, Changhua Christian Hospital, Tainan National Cheng Kung University Hospital, and Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital met to share the results and experiences of the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC), a quality monitoring program initiated from Australia for palliative care, over the past year.

Under the guidance of the National Health Administration of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the “2020 Taiwan Hospice Palliative Care Quality Monitoring Program Conference”, jointly organized by Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, Taiwan Association of Hospice Palliative Nursing, and Taiwan Academy of Hospice Palliative Medicine, was held on December 19 at the Xie Li Building of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital. It was attended by nearly 120 participants

from 32 medical institutions throughout Taiwan. The conference invited nurses from five hospitals participating in the Palliative Care Outcomes Collaboration (PCOC), including Taipei Veterans General Hospital, Taipei United Hospital, Changhua Christian Hospital, Tainan National Cheng Kung University Hospital, and Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, to share their experiences in promoting PCOC. Participants exchanged ideas, learned about the concept of “person-centered” care, which is based on respect for individual values, preferences, and needs, improved communication skills, and took part in the process of group exercises.

Wang Ying-Wei, Director of the Health Promotion Administration, Ministry of Health and Welfare, briefed participants via video conference in the morning on the current status of the Taiwan Hospice and Palliative Care Quality Program, emphasizing the three most important levels of hospice quality: national evaluation at the macro level, institutional evaluation at the meso level, and clinical review at the micro level. In order to establish a proper benchmark for judging quality, all three levels must be taken into account. Hsieh Jyg-Gang, Chief of the Division of Palliative Medicine at Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, introduced the strategies of quality indicators for hospice and palliative care in countries

around the world. He mentioned that the existing forms of hospice palliative care and clinical practice are basically in line with international quality standards, but the identification of terminally ill patients, attention to cultural issues, and ethical and legal discussions can be further strengthened in the hope that more progress can be made.

Regarding the future outlook of PCOC, Deputy Director of the Department of Nursing, Wang Shu-Chen,

expressed her hope for the development of a sound PCOC system in Taiwan and the establishment of a Taiwan hospice and palliative care platform to promote the participation of hospice and palliative care in major hospitals in Taiwan, so that any patients, families, and caregivers can also participate, making PCOC the common language of hospice and palliative care. It is hoped that the use of objective data to assess care needs and provide appropriate care plans



Director Wang Ying-Wei of the Health Promotion Administration (fifth from right), who joined the meeting via video conference in the morning, arrives in the afternoon to participate in the general discussion.

will promote the quality of hospice and palliative care and improve the ability of caregivers to meet the care needs of patients.

This conference and the presentation of results from the pilot hospitals will not only improve the science-based nursing indicators, but also allow participants to effectively understand and learn about the PCOC implementation model with a view to the continual implementation of quality monitored care in Taiwan in

the future. Perhaps not all diseases can be cured by medicine, but through the efforts of healthcare professionals, patients at the end of their lives can complete their final journey in the most comfortable way possible. Director Wang Ying-Wei said that PCOC began with a demonstration at five hospitals this year, and will be implemented at 37 hospitals next year in order to further improve the quality improvement program more comprehensively in the future.



Deputy Director Wang Shu-Chen of the Department of Nursing expresses her hope for the development of a sound PCOC system in Taiwan and that PCOC will become the common language of hospice and palliative care.