



My Iron Man Hero Dream Fulfilling in ER

Wu Yan-Chen, RN, Emergency Room, Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital



“Health Bureau EMOC (Emergency Medical Response Center) Bulletin announced a train overturn accident with large number of injuries requiring immediate medical care from all four major hospitals in Hualien.” On April 2, 2021, a seemingly ordinary day made a drastic turn with this announcement. It became the most unforgettable day in my ER nursing career.

It was around 10:00am when I received the news from the ER Nursing Group messaging system of the Hospital. I was just up from my bed since I worked the night shift the day before. Immediately, I contacted all my colleagues. Everybody was getting ready and heading to the hospital to respond to the emergency. When I arrived at the hospital, I found all the midnight shift senior nurses were still there. They were there ready to respond, just like the day shift workers. They directed us to change, to check in. There were many doctors, nurses, administrative staff and volunteers. It seemed like the entire hospital was on the move.



11:10am, April 2, 2021, Dr. Lin Chin-Lon (left), CEO of Tzu Chi Medical Foundation and RN Wu Yan-Chen (right) rushed (from the ER of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital) to the Clearwater accident scene for disaster medical relief.

I was assigned to assist Doctor Lin Chin-Lon, CEO of Tzu Chi Medical Foundation. We were responsible to contact EMOC to collect disaster medical assistant equipment from the Disaster Medical Assistant Team (DMAT). With all the disaster equipment, we then went directly to the accident site – the north entrance of the Great Clearwater Tunnel. On the



way to the site, my mind was very perturbed. I had never witnessed the aftermath of a disaster. I could not image what would be in front of me at the scene. All I could do in the vehicle was to tell myself to do my best.

The accident site was a big mess. Twisted metal trains, countless injuries, noises of crying and screaming, and voices of the relief personnel. When we arrived at the medical station, senior nurse Kao Li-Cheng and emergency doctor Lin Yu-Kuan were already there for emergency relieve. Under the direction of the station commander, Dr. Lin Chin-Lon, we started to join their efforts without any delay.

However, the on-site scene of a disaster was totally different from the environment of the hospital. Due to the insufficient facility, equipment and supplies, our capability was limited. What we could do were the initial screening of the injuries and evaluating/classifying of their situations. The activities including testing the patients'

breathe, their vital signs and ability to move. Based on these screenings the injured were then be classified and then sent to the appropriate hospitals.

To my surprise, even in such a noisy and confusing situation there were orders amidst the chaos. Volunteers followed instructions of the medical personnel to classify injuries. Some passengers with minor injuries asked to take care of others with trauma injuries in order to save resources for survival. This made me realized the beauty of the true human nature. During a disaster, most people are willing to support and cheer up each other, whether strangers or not. That warmed up a sad environment. I felt the warmth of our society - the willingness of self-sacrifice of the people around us. A long and sad day finally ended in darkness. The relief teams dissolved one-by-one, and the tired medical teams returned to their hospitals slowly. However, this unusual day deeply locks in my mind, forever.

I graduated from Tzu Chi University with a nursing degree. After graduation, I selected ER nursing as my career. In the emergency room, we face unexpected incidents daily. For example, an unconscious patient without the accompanying of anyone, came into the ER. How could we figure out his problem? His condition may get worse at any instant. What would be the proper treatment and care? A good ER nurse needs not just special skills but a clear mind with logical thinking, and attentive to patients. One needs to continuously evaluate a patient's need and adjust the care treatment accordingly. Recalling my early days, I was often nervous, panic and sometimes standing there didn't know what to do. Fortunately, there were many senior nurses provided their helping hands and direct me toward the right direction. Slowly, I picked up the essential skills and started to perform my tasks independently.

Thanks for the support and guidance of my good classmates, good colleagues and senior nurses for all the helps that accompanying my growth and thriving.

Emergency medicine is very challenging. I do not regret for my choice. I always imagine being in the front line to save lives. My experience tells me that I still have a lot to learn. My heart tells me: "I am ordinary, but I want to put on the iron armor and become an Iron Man". I will continue to improve myself and become a perfect nurse, which is my initial resolve.