



Kuanshan

Alleviating the Suffering Caused by Diabetic Feet – A Pair of Shoes Embodies a Doctor’s Love and Concern

February 22, 2022

Mr. Li, an elderly gentleman who lives alone, had tissue necrosis in his right toes several years ago, which was caused by an unhealed, chronic diabetic wound. As a result, two of his toes had to be amputated. Due to damage to his peripheral nerves, he frequently has no

perception of pain caused by injuries to his feet. He usually only notices such injuries if bleeding is present.

“Why is your foot bleeding again?”, a medical staff member of the Dialysis Ward of Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital worriedly asked when examining Mr. Li’s chronic sole wound which refuses to heal. He replied that “rain boots are a nuisance when working in the fields because the mud sticks to them.” Mr. Li is a hard-working farmer who is used to tilling the fields bare footed. This complicates the wound healing process, but he doesn’t mind. The only thing he cares about is his crops which provides



Dr. Wu Sheng-Teng, Vice Superintendent and Dr. of the Nephrology Dept. at Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital, provides meticulous care for every patient. In addition to the constant observation of patients’ conditions and needs on his own initiative, he is fully committed to finding solutions for their problems.

him with food and clothing. The bleeding wound is no more than a scratch to him.

Dr. Wu Sheng-Teng, Vice Superintendent and Dr. of the Nephrology Dept., warned him during one of his ward rounds that “another amputation could be necessary if the process of repeated infection and inflammation of his foot can’t be stopped.” He personally urged Mr. Li to refrain from working in the fields before his wound was fully healed. Mr. Li told him that he was willing to heed his advice, but since the fertilizing period had arrived, he was forced to enter the field.

Profoundly aware of the drudgery and toil of farming, Dr. Wu had noticed that Mr. Li had wrapped his foot in a plastic bag to shield the wound from water exposure. Due to the fact that this is detrimental to the healing process, he gave him a pair of shoes with protective functions as a gift. Dr. Wu adds that “due to our concern, the patient realized how serious his condition was and that wound deterioration posed a constant danger. We therefore reached a consensus with the patient who expressed his willingness to cooperate in the therapy. As a result of his cooperative attitude and trust in the medical team, his wound gradually healed.” Dr. Wu further explains that special caution is required if diabetes patients with a heart stent have worsening wounds in their foot areas.

If bacteria spread to the upper parts, the whole leg has to be amputated. He shares how a dialysis patient with an infected leg wound had succumbed to septicemia.

Mr. Li says that he has “never encountered a doctor who was so concerned about him” and that he is “deeply grateful for all he had done for him.” The concern shown by the medical staff of the Nephrology Division over the past two years exceeds that of family members. He recalls how a member of the nursing staff suggested extending the dialysis treatment by one hour due to his concerning urotoxin levels during a follow-up visit. Since he was quite irritable and in a hurry to get back to his field that day, he brusquely rejected her advice and just walked away. Thinking back on this incident, he feels “sorry towards this staff member for treating her that way, but she wasn’t even angry!”

Ms. Wu Shu-Pin, Head Nurse of the Hemodialysis Unit, remarks that Dr. Wu is a very conscientious person and that he always meticulously observes the patient’s condition and needs. For instance, if a dialysis patient refuses treatment or expresses the wish to reduce the frequency of dialysis, he not only urges the patient to adhere to the dialysis treatment regimen but makes an active effort to understand the true reasons for his refusal. If there is a

solution to patient problems, he does his utmost to help them. If the patient has to cancel a visit due to family matters, we immediately arrange another time for the dialysis treatment. If a patient's mobility is deteriorating and there is a need for walking aids, Dr. Wu will inquire about the patient's available resources or refer the patient to a long-term care institution to ensure optimal care for the patient and his/her family members. Even after the patient is admitted to a long-term care facility, Dr. Wu follows up and shows continued concern for the patient to confirm he/she is properly cared for and will be able to continue dialysis treatment

in a worry-free manner.

The pair of shoes, which is a gift from Doctor Wu and encapsulates the love and concern for the patient, not only represents the perfect medicine for the patient's chronic wound but also tells a heartwarming story that occurred at the small town hospital.



As a direct result of the meticulous care and genuine concern shown by Dr. Wu and the medical team of the dialysis ward, Mr. Li finally realized the seriousness of his wound and was willing to cooperate in the therapy, which resulted in the gradual healing of the wound.