



Taipei

Dental Service for People with Disability

October, 2010

In October 2010, Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital network mailbox received an appeal letter that writes, "I have toothache for a few months, but I have been rejected by many dental clinics and hospitals. I would like to know if Tzu Chi Hospital can help a patient with cerebral palsy for a dental implant? If so, please let me know. Thank you!"

This letter was written by Ms. Chiang seeking for dental help. She has cerebral palsy; hence, her body will jerk uncontrollably. Normal dental treatment requires patient to remain motionless. However, in her case, she can hardly open her mouth for four minutes without turning. It is truly a great challenge for dentists.

Chiang lives in Hukou, Hsinchu. She has had cerebral palsy since she was young. Cerebral palsy triggers irregular uncontrolled jerky movement. Even if she wants to drink a cup of water slowly, it becomes difficult. Involuntary movement made her teeth brushing improper, as a result, a total of eight teeth were pulled due to cavities. During these years, she was hoping to find a dental clinic help

her with the implants, but to no avail. For almost twenty years, she has been suffering with dental problem. She could never enjoy eating. It has not been easy to her.

Although she has been rejected numerous times by hospitals and clinics, Chiang did not give up. She sent out emails to all major hospitals and dental clinics in Taiwan to seek help. She believes someday and somewhere, there would be a miracle. She knew if she gave up, soon



after, she would be unable to eat and her health would be in jeopardy.

Finally, she received two responses. She said, "I am so happy. I thought all of emails were treated as spams." A month later, she made up her mind to come to Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital for treatment.

This message was received by dentist Po-Chih Hsu. He assessed her case immediately with the dental and anesthesiology team and discussed in details to see the possibility of the

implant. Director of the Dental Department E-Chin Shen commented, "Thanks to Superintendent Dr. Zhao's support in dental renovation for patients with disabilities. A dental clinic for patients with disabilities is now officially operating. This facility has wheelchairs and anesthesia machines inside the examination room. The Department of Anesthesiology now can come to assist. With a full set of first aid equipment, technically it will have no problem."



Chiang was the first patient of Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital Dental Clinic for People with Disabilities. Before treatment, she underwent anesthesia. Many physicians were involved for her treatment, from dentures, installation, tooth decay and production, each step was a big project. Chiang waited for twenty years and she finally has good teeth again.



In providing treatment for physical and mental disorders patients, dentists and nurses all required to have extreme patience. From giving explanation to making patients feel at ease, the team has to comfort patients so trust and acceptance would be built.

So the medical team notified Chiang to come to the hospital for treatment. She was also the first patient the clinic would serve.

Dentists Po-Chih Hsu and Wei-Mu Wang explained the whole process of the implant to Chiang who then said, “They are very friendly, and did not have any impatience at all. It makes me happy and grateful. It is beyond any words to describe how I feel!”

In consideration of Chiang's residence location, the whole medical team tried to accommodate her schedule as much as possible. In order to solve her head

jittering problem, general anesthesia were used in two separate operations. Dentist Po-Chih Hsu was in charge of the molding, extractions, and denture. Dentist Wei-Mu Wang was responsible for follow-up dentures installation, aesthetic and reconstruction. Hsu said, “If her head moves during surgery, it may cause gum tissue damage. As a result, anesthesia is relatively safe in this case.”

On the day of surgery, Chiang nervously lied inside the examination room.

“Take it easy. We are ready. The doctors are all here as well.”

Medical teams pat her shoulders to relax. In the meantime, they monitored her heart rate, blood pressure, and injected anesthesia into a vein in the arm. Anesthesiologist Cay-Hsuyen Chen said, “Dental anesthesia is different from general anesthesia. The anesthesia must let the patient not feel any pain but not fully asleep. If doctor needs her to open mouth, she needs to be able to listen to the doctor's instructions. If the anesthesia was too much, it would inhibit breathing. As a result, it is extremely critical to draw the line. When Dr. Hsu began the surgery, Dr. Wei Mu Wang was next to Chiang to monitor her condition. Although respiratory depression emergency did happen to her once during surgery, but fortunately, the medical staffs were all standing-by and the operation was successful completed.



Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital set up the Dental Clinic for People with Disabilities, hoping they would have the opportunity to maintain healthy mouth and teeth.

Three months later, the long process of fillings and dental adjustment treatment began. Chiang returned to the clinic every two weeks. The whole process took more than six months. Finally, her eight teeth were pulled and replaced.

Dr. Wang said, “When we do the dentures, patients can’t have anesthesia because she need to listen to follow with doctor’s instructions to open her mouth, to bite down, to rub side to side. However, due to her head jittering irregularly, she can’t chew well. It makes the adjustment more difficult. During each treatment, a nurse was required to hold her head, and when her head jittered, we quickly stopped. We spent twice the resources and triple the time than average.”

In addition, dental treatment often uses sharp equipment and objects. It is very easy to accidentally scratch her oral or even scratch the artery causing bleeding profusely when her head jitters. However, Dr. Wei-Mu Wang was able to do it with extra caution to achieve the progress and all treatment was completed safely.

In October 2011, Chiang finally completed a full year treatment. She finally has beautiful and healthy teeth. She is full of gratitude and appreciation to Taipei Tzu Chi medical team. She wrote a long letter to thank the Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital. The letter says, “Since my childhoods, every dentist looked at my situation, they always shook their heads and told me there was no way to help me. The only thing they can do for me is only extraction. To treat a patient like me need to spend so much manpower and material resources, no wonder there are no hospitals willing to do such treatment for patients with disabilities. I am so lucky to be able to meet these enthusiastic and loving medical staffs who have tried so hard for me. Their kindness and genuine attitude help me to overcome all fear. It’s all because of a group of young, handsome, enthusiastic, caring dentists in Tzu Chi Hospital who are willing to surmount painstaking procedures and time to help patients with disability, so I could have the best treatment possible.”