

Development of Eastern Renal Support Association (ERSA)- from dependence to independence using collaborative care model

Wong Rebecca 1,3, Ho H S 2,3, Fung Stella 2,3, Wong K S 2,3

Institution : Community & Patient Resource Center¹ (PRC)

Department of Medicine²

PYNEH³

Introduction

End stage renal failure (ESRF) patients face lots of physical and psychological stress and life adjustment on starting dialysis. Once grows beyond their sick role, the renal patient's potential for self care and mutual care can be very beneficial in the rehabilitative process. Collaborative care involving patients and carers is thus useful in improving patient care.

Purpose of the project

The process of engaging our renal patients and their carers as partners in enhancing patient's care and quality of life was recorded and analyzed.

Materials & Methods

Renal Self Help Group (involving renal patients and carers) was the second patient group established in PYNEH since 1997. Over the past 10 years, 3 strategies were employed in engaging it as our close partner:

1. From Mutual Support to Vision Embracing

Initially, enthusiastic patients with stable condition and carers were formed into a core group (CG). The vision and mission of organizing a support group were shared. The CG was involved in exploring patients' needs and suitable programs started. This ensured the CG embrace the vision.

2. Team Building and Organization

Under social worker's guidance, the CG was encouraged to take up different roles and to develop programs (talks, peer sharing and outings) for the group. With more experience, the role of social worker evolved gradually from a co-worker to facilitator and finally advisor over the years.

Different trainings (e.g. proposal writing, program organization and interpersonal skills) organized by PRC or external partners (e.g. CRN) were provided to the CG.

3. Towards Independence and Autonomy

The group was encouraged to join the Alliance for Renal Patients Mutual Help Association to facilitate learning from other renal support groups.

The group's maturity was annually reassessed. In 2004,

PRC started to set up a working schedule and worked with the CG towards independence - such as reforming its group structure and drafting constitution.

Results

The group was registered as an independent patient association (ERSA) in 2007. It has been providing more than 70 psychosocial programs for 10 years on its own or with PRC and renal unit in PYNEH for new renal patients and carers. Currently it serves over 600 ESRF patients on renal replacement therapy. ERSA also bridges between clinical staff and the patients to improve mutual understanding and relationship.

Conclusions

In conclusion, an independent patient support group (ERSA) was successfully nurtured to maturity, becoming a collaborative partner of PYNEH in providing a holistic care to the ESRF patients in HKEC.