

Integrated Palliative Day Care Centre for Cancer Patient in the Community

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Introduction

For most patients and their families, the diagnosis and treatment of malignant disease is a major intrusion into their lives. Despite an improved survival from advancement in oncological interventions, patients with advanced incurable malignant disease often feel isolated, with feeling of helplessness, sadness and inability to cope due to lack of confidence. Many feel burdened by the responsibility of illness, and the impact that it has on their families.

Purpose of the Project

The aim of day care is to reach people early in the palliative phase of their disease, to rehabilitate where possible, improve the quality of life of patients and enable them to return to their normal way of life as soon as possible. As patients often need adjustments in life, day care provides the information and assistance required to make choices and decisions, and allows patients to exercise control over their lives.

Material & Methods

Palliative day care is a complex service. It attempts to address patients' physical, psychosocial, social and spiritual needs within an environment that acknowledge individuality and the need for flexibility. In attempting to address these needs, the Integrated Palliative Day Care Centre (IPDCC) at TSKHCACC is set up in September 2006 to serve cancer patients, and it puts a high priority on:

- acknowledging patient's uniqueness and individuality
- promoting independence and enhancing quality of life through control of symptoms and rehabilitation
- psychological support aimed at improving strategies for dealing with stress, anxiety and depression and increasing self esteem and confidence
- engendering hope and meaning
- relief of solid isolation and provision of respite for carers
- co-ordination of the health and social care networks involved in patients' care

It is a pilot collaboration project between HKEC and the community partner, Hong Kong Cancer Fund. In order to meet the needs of the communities which we serve, the centre accepts the self-referral direct from patients or relatives. Being well equipped and under support from various professional disciplines and volunteer personnel, the IPDCC provides a whole range of specialist palliative day care through rehabilitation therapy, management and monitoring of symptoms and the provision of psychosocial support and hospice palliative day care through creative, diversional and complementary therapy (e.g. art work, baking, aromatherapy, hypnosis) to enhance social interaction, mutual support and friendship and respite for home carers.

Results

In the recent year, there was a total of 7170 attendance which included medical/nursing consultations. The project served the following:

- building up a community psychosocial network for cancer patients and their families
- empowerment of patient and their families in self-caring and coping skills to relieve physical and psychosocial distress from the disease.

A patient satisfaction survey was conducted and the results confirmed that patients highly valued the services provided by the centre (average satisfaction level was 4.64 out of a 5 point scale). In addition, based on the evaluation by the patients, over 95% of them found that the complementary programs/activities had helped them in attaining knowledge and support, which could be easily applied in their daily life.

Conclusions

This program witnessed the provision of best holistic palliative care and represented a jointed effort from various medical professions, cancer patients and families, volunteers and organization from the community.