

ASPAC newsletter

January-June 2021 Volume 12



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Our VISION

"DO EVERYTHING FOR LOVE EVEN THE MOST ORDINARY THINGS"

With support from our community, we will provide the best compassionate, competent and loving care to all those who suffer from life-threatening illnesses.

Our MISSION

To empower people to live with dignity and hope whilst coping with illness and loss by providing quality medical care, spiritual and psychosocial support to patients and their families.

Our CORE VALUES

Honour and Respect the wishes of our patients

Excellence of care

To always serve with Compassion and Love

EDITORIAL

Our hope for a better 2021 has yet to materialise in this first half of the year. Covid infection numbers continue to soar putting a huge strain on public and even private healthcare facilities. The only consolation is the ramping up of vaccinations and that our staff have been fully vaccinated. This gives them some measure of protection should they need to make physical visits to our patients in their homes albeit still donned in their 'spacesuits'.

In the meantime, we continue monitoring patients' progress via video calls. We also make it a point to remind our patients, their families and carers to vaccinate, stay home, keep safe and away from Hospitals which are overstretched.

Continuing Education to upgrade knowledge of our Medical team is provided via the fortnightly Project ECHO. This programme is ongoing, with good participation from colleagues in Palliative Care throughout the country. It has proven to be an excellent forum for our Medical team to get acquainted with other service providers within the Specialty.

This year, we welcomed our new Manager, Malliga Perumal, who will oversee our Fund Raising projects. Our Medical team has also been strengthened by an additional Medical Officer, Dr Wong Foo Keong.

Recruitment of suitable nursing staff and adequate funding continue to be challenges but we plod on as we feel this is a much needed service to the Community.

Regrettably, due to pandemic restrictions, we have been unable to provide volunteer services much valued by our patients. Our volunteers have provided considerable support and cheer, and are truly appreciated by our patients as well as their family members.

To all of you who have been supporting our work, we thank you for your contributions and look forward to your continued support.

Thank you.

Dr Patricia Por

**Spread love everywhere you go.
Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.**

- Mother Theresa -

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PROJECT ECHO

By DR TEH EE VON



Project ECHO (*Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes*) was started in mid-2020 to promote sharing of knowledge between hospices. It started with only a handful of hospices looking to exchange resources and experiences in the Covid-19 era. By year end, the sessions were more regular and the steering committee sought to expand the idea to involve all the other hospices around the country whose struggles with continuous education during the pandemic would be similarly affected as well.

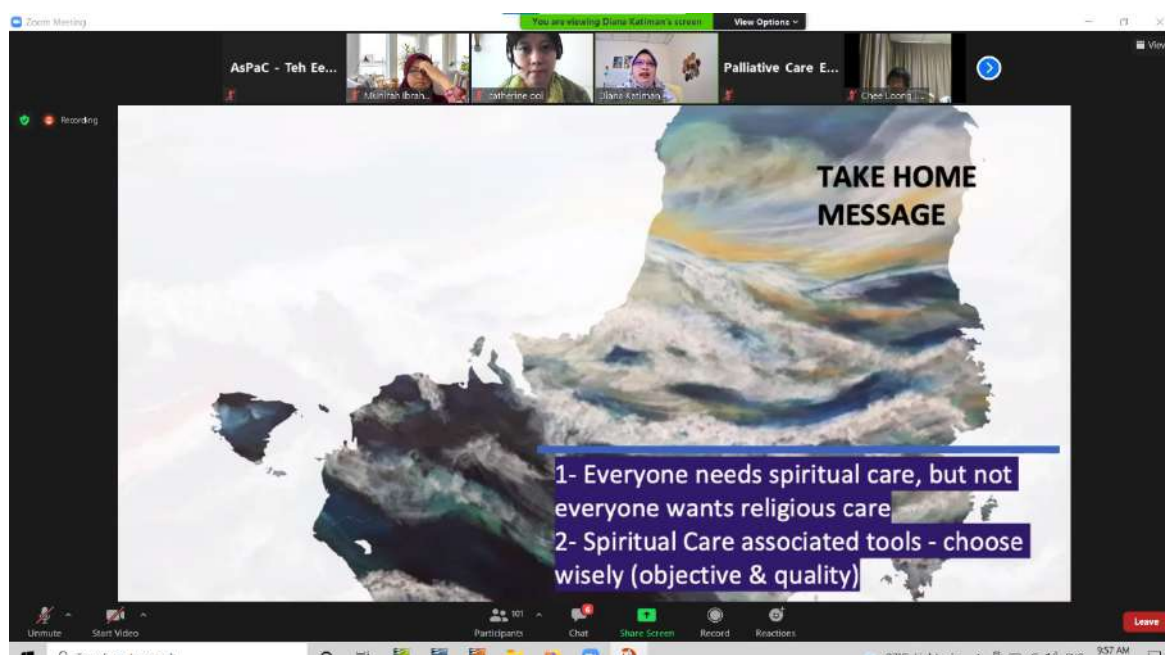
ASPAC joined in the sessions in November 2020, and as word spread, it has since expanded to involve over a hundred participants each time. The participants range from new, small hospice services to long-established hospices and experienced consultants both in the community and hospital setting. After some discussion and adjustments over the months, it is now run every fortnight.

The session first starts off with a didactic talk by a senior consultant on various topics relevant to the community palliative care providers.

Subsequently, there will be a case presentation related to the topic, then followed by 1 to 2 main questions brought up for discussion by the participants. ASPAC's SN Roohini contributed a case in December on terminal delirium. All are encouraged to ask further questions or give feedback and a summary of the session is later emailed to participants afterwards.

This initiative is truly helpful to us to get to know other palliative care providers around the country and will no doubt raise the level of care provided to all palliative care patients. Thank you and kudos to the organising committee for all the effort put into spearheading this project.

Thank you from all of us at ASPAC!



PENANG PERINATAL PALLIATIVE CARE SEMINAR

By DR TEH EE VON

As the Covid-19 situation in the country continued to progress seemingly without an end in sight, everyone has learned to adapt. Organisers of conferences that were earlier delayed or cancelled have decided to make do and go virtual instead. One such gathering was the Perinatal Palliative Care Seminar, which was organised on the 21st of June 2021 by Hospital Seberang Jaya together with the Malaysian Paediatric Association and MyPPC (Malaysian Paediatric Palliative Care Reference Group).

Consultants from all over the country came together to share on how to support babies born with life-limiting illnesses and their parents. This care starts from the moment a diagnosis is made during the pregnancy, and an early death is

expected. Experts taught attendees how they could prepare the parents for the difficult journey ahead. The team has to support the parents' grief and yet try to make beautiful memories at the same time.

It was moving for all of us to see how such a painful experience can be turned into a transformative journey for the family and staff involved. We learned just how much more can be done by the healthcare team when a 'normal' delivery and childhood life is not an option. It is a testament to the power of shared humanity when tiny babies with such short lives can become the catalyst of personal growth for all those around them.



WE ARE FULLY VACCINATED!

By Palliative Care Nurses SATWIN & ROOHINI

Team Assisi Palliative Care got our vaccinations during the 1st phase for frontliners. This would not have happened without the help of Dr Lam Chee Loong, Chairperson of the Malaysian Hospice Council, who understood the importance of having hospice staff supporting patients at home.

Our medical team was vaccinated at Sunway Convention Centre and KPJ Damansara, and all of us completed both doses in April 2021. It was overall a smooth and well-organized experience, with minimal side effects afterwards.

Since we are all vaccinated, we are able to visit our patients with less fear and can give our best service to them. Once again, thank you to the MHC and Dr Lam for helping to get us vaccinated.



THE GENERAL'S DAUGHTERS

It was the month of February 2020, couple of weeks before my father's birthday. I remembered the day I took him to his chemo day care at Ampang Hospital. It was my day off from the office and I always took turns with my twin sister to bring him there every two weeks. Little did I know that it would be his last trip to see the doctors and nurses for his usual blood checks.

As we came back from our breakfast at the unusually crowded café at Ampang Hospital, my father waited patiently for his turn to be called by the doctor on duty. Then, I heard a male Chinese doctor whom I've never met call my father's name, "Datuk Abdul Kadir Nordin". I quickly got up and told him, "I'm his daughter", and that he can speak to me on my father's progress. His face turned to my father and said, "Datuk, you stay put first ya, I need to speak to your daughter, and then we will update you on the situation ya". My father nodded, as he cannot see clearly. His glaucoma is getting worse, thus we will always hold his hand every time he walks. The doctor pulled me aside and told me that my father's cancer cells have spread very fast, especially in the brain. Although it was initially lymphoma, the cells had spread faster to the brain than the body. He calmly told me that my father cannot be treated with anymore chemo procedures, radiation or even pills. It will just make him even worse and will damage his kidney, heart and lungs. I fell silent. Felt numb, confused and miserable. Then, I felt my tears roll down. Worst of all, I was alone hearing this unforeseeable news. I asked the doctor how much time he had left and he said roughly 6 months or so. I couldn't believe this was happening to my strong-willed father, an army general, a fighter awarded with the second highest gallantry award in the country, a dean's list Masters student, a man who saved his country from the communists, an influential leader whom my sister and I look up to greatly. No words can describe the moment I heard that heartbreaking news. I just nodded to the doctor that I understood the situation. I told him to not break this news to my dad just yet, my family and I will



take it from there. He agreed and sought my permission to inform my father the updates just on the surface. When the doctor was speaking to my father, I was called to the counter, a lady doctor told me she will register my father with Hospice care and will find one near Kajang and also registered him to the Hospital's Palliative unit. It didn't register in my head what all that meant, but as soon as I came home, we did all the research on home care. I am so grateful and thankful to the doctors at Hospital Ampang and ever since my father's first appointment with Dr Jerome (consultant for hematology department), the doctors and nurses have been supportive and caring throughout our journey.

While we drove home, my father kept asking me when will his next appointment be and I said he would just need to take pills at home and not go back to the hospital. I don't know whether he knew or whether he was pretending to not know what was happening. Whatever it was, I felt like



bursting into tears in the car, but I just kept it together and texted my sister telling her that we needed the whole family to come together to understand our father's situation. After a long quiet drive, my father asked what we were going to have for lunch. I cheered up a bit and said, "Anything daddy, anything you feel like eating". He said, "Lama tak makan ayam kampung kat Bangi". Of course, anything for you my dearest, loving father. So, I called up my mother and twin sister to meet us there. When we finished lunch, I drove back home with my mum and cried buckets in the car as I told her the situation.

After a week at home, both my sister and I prepared what was needed in the house for our father to feel most comfortable at home. We prepared our dad by telling him that we are no longer going to the hospital, but the Doctor is coming to our house. He was of course relieved and could not wait for the Hospice Doctor to come.

The ASPAC Hospice team's first visit was around 2 weeks after we registered at the Hospital. Both Doctor Teh and Sister Mary came by and introduced themselves. My father told them how he got his illness and Doc was impressed by how he remembered and how he could still walk and talk. We were impressed by the generosity and sincerity by the Hospice team. Before this, we did not know about Hospice and how they would make a great impact on our family.

By March, we were in lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hospice doctors took turns to 'visit' our father via video-conferencing. They would make endless calls to ensure our father had enough medical supplies and that his health was fine. It was a blessing we had these 3 months of lockdown to spend time with him, pray with him, and walk around the house to see his plants!

A few months passed by and father's condition was deteriorating. By June, Doc Teh and the nurse could already make visits (with PPEs!). We were relieved. The Doc stocked us up with medicines and we had to also buy medical equipment for father's condition. Doc Teh kept reminding us to be prepared for the worst. Of course, it was difficult for our family to accept at first. But as Muslims, we believed in fate. As both my sister and I were working from home (WFH), we took turns to feed him, to bathe him, to change his clothes and etc. The WFH situation was a blessing for us as we managed to take care of him.

By August, our father was already paralysed and could not speak. Dad had no wires at all around him. Doc Teh advised that we get extra help to manage our father. We had a very special nurse by the name of Paul. He had also made a very special impact on our family. Even Doc Teh was impressed with him!

From August until September, there were a lot of

visitors; father's friends and family came by to visit. Doc Teh came by almost twice a week. Sometimes our father knew she was coming and smiled at her. The dedication and commitment from Doc Teh and her team was remarkable. She consoled my mother, telling her to be prepared and to be by his side. No other doctors would do that. Only Hospice Doctors would have that compassion and empathy.

12th September 2020 was my eldest brother's 50th birthday and we had everyone gathered at the house. Dad woke up to see my mom for the last time. After midnight, my dad took his last breath and died peacefully on 13th September 2020. He waited for my brother to turn 50 and left us all.



We could not have had the energy nor the fighting spirit if not for the assistance and guidance from Dr Teh and the ASPAC Hospice team. To say they were amazing is clearly an understatement. Our sincere thanks and appreciation to ASPAC Hospice for being there in our lives during the hard times.

We miss you so much Daddy. Rest now Daddy, we will see you soon God-willing.

Sincerely,

The General's Daughters

ENCOUNTERING OUR JOURNEY WITH ENNEAGRAM

By **JUDITH LOH-KOH**

For the last 12 years, I have been a pastoral care volunteer with Assunta Hospital. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic which began in March 2020, the pastoral care service was temporarily suspended. I got to know about ASPAC through Sr. Mary Kristin whom I have known for over thirty years. When my mother-in-law fell ill a few years back, we had the opportunity of obtaining the services of the team from ASPAC. For this I am grateful. I have

always admired these personnel - nurses and doctors in the area of palliative work - as their work requires a different set of skills; and their focus on compassionate care when attending to and caring for those facing life-limiting illnesses as well as their family members and loved ones.

When I was invited by Dr Patricia Por to journey with the staff of ASPAC, I agreed without much

hesitation. This engagement began in March this year, and through personal and group encounters, we decided to work with the Enneagram. The Enneagram is a popular and a recognized method of gaining insight into one's personality type. In the Enneagram there are 9 personality types; that is, from 1 to 9. Enneagram has become an increasingly common tool used across a broad spectrum of professions. I first encountered Enneagram more than 15 years ago when I was doing my training as a spiritual companion. I found it extremely useful as it helped me understand the "why" not only behind my personality type but of others too. It is a roadmap to self-understanding and self-awareness. It is a life tool to better identify not only our self-destructive patterns but to awaken us as well to the unique gifts that each of us possess. It is a life journey of discovery.

The Management of ASPAC has to be congratulated, as they invested in 'caring values', creating an environment that empowers their staff. Their focus is not only on caring for the dying patients and providing support for their loved ones, but also giving support to the team that is the backbone of ASPAC. When I began my

volunteer service in ASPAC, I was aware of the management's concern for the welfare of their frontliners, especially during this time of the pandemic. My presence there is to facilitate their concerns and to support them not only in their work but also on a personal level. It is a team that supports each other in a challenging, physical and emotional environment. For want of a better

systematic approach, Enneagram lends itself readily to understanding the nature of the personal self as one develops a deeper understanding of one's well-being. Through one's growing self-awareness, it will also help one to accept and understand their loved ones as well as

their working colleagues. It is an ongoing process and my role is that of a guide, listener and mirror.

Over the years of giving the Enneagram, I noticed that the majority of people live lives not recognizing the importance of attentiveness to their thoughts, emotions, behaviors and life patterns. We seem to operate from an auto pilot reaction, performing our repetitive habits based on our life situations and mental patterns that have been conditioned within us. Through the tools of Enneagram, we learn to recognize the important areas of self-observation and self-



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"It is very useful to understand our own behaviour and tendencies. Whether we realise it or not, they greatly impact our daily interactions with our patients, team members, and loved ones." – Ee Von

”

“

"I am grateful to get to know Jude. Life was much simpler before we met but It is good to be able to discover your own self and understand why others are behaving in such a way." – Masita

”

management, in the process for change. We do this as a non-judgmental, compassionate observer.

Through this practice of awareness of oneself, via the regular monitoring session and the support and honest sharing sessions of the team members, I believe this will help to bring about the path of abundance through positive change, courage, joy, peace and acceptance. This will take root in their personal life, in their relationships and in their service as doctors and nurses; armed with compassionate care as they recognise the dignity and the gift of the human person who is facing their end of life.

It is a privilege for me to help out at ASPAC, and through this process, it is helping me in my self-development too.

Thank you.

“

“Thank you for introducing enneagram, it’s been useful for me to understand myself better and the way I react on certain things.”

– Satwin

”

“

“Really helpful to understand own behavior. Can implement for daily basic, personal life and for work.”

– Roohini

”

NEW APPOINTMENTS



DR WONG FOO KEONG joined ASPAC as Medical Officer on 1 May 2021. Prior to joining ASPAC, he worked as a general practitioner for 2 years in a private clinic. Previously he was a medical officer at Ministry of Health Malaysia.

He is an experienced doctor who had worked in primary care at a Klinik Kesihatan in Tawau and a private clinic in Kuala Lumpur. He graduated from Melaka Manipal Medical College and is a registered doctor with the Malaysian Medical Council.



MALLIGA PERUMAL joined ASPAC as its Manager on 1 June 2021.

She brings along with her almost 20 years of experience in marketing, designing programmes and events. She is currently pursuing her MBA and possesses Train the Trainer Certificate from HRDF.

Her duties and responsibilities include managing the office and fundraising events.

DONATION FORM

NAME

NRIC / PASSPORT NO.

MOBILE NO. / HOME TELEPHONE NO.

EMAIL

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

Please accept my contribution of

RM30 RM60 RM90

Other amount: RM

I would like to contribute regularly as follows

Monthly Quarterly

Half-yearly Yearly

Starting from: _____ to: _____

Month Year Month Year

RM (in numbers):

RM (in words):

MODE OF PAYMENT

By cheque (Only for single donations.)
Cheque No: _____
Issuing Bank: _____

Bank Transfer (Only for single donations.)

Payee Details:

ASSISI PALLIATIVE CARE BERHAD
PUBLIC BANK A/C No: 31968057-28

By Credit Card (Visa/Mastercard)

Credit Card No:

Expiry Date: _____

Issuing Bank: _____

Signature

Date

DONOR SIGNATURE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I understand that by signing this Direct Debit Authorisation Form, I have read and understood the Terms and Conditions governing this Authorisation as reflected in the next section.

I also agree that my personal data provided is accurate and true, and consent to the collections, disclosure and use of this personal data by Assisi Palliative Care Bhd and its fundraising partners, the purpose of administration of this donation, in accordance with the Personal Data Protection Act 2010.

I consent to be acknowledged in publicity materials such as the annual reports, online platforms and event materials.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Direct Debit Donor Programme

Processing of the donations and the management of the database and donor communications is outsourced to <company name>. Your full donation will be 100% received by ASPAC. Each year, Assisi Palliative Care Bhd will allocate budget for various fundraising programme which includes Direct Debit Donor Programme, including the administration of this programme

Donation made by Debit or Credit Card

The first deduction will be made within 7 to 10 working days upon your signed acknowledgement of the Direct Debit Authorisation Form. Assisi Palliative Care Bhd will continue to charge the amount indicated above or the amount authorised by you to be deducted (which may differ from the amount indicated above) to your debit/credit card, so long as there is no change in the name of the cardholder and the debit/credit card number, unless and until the authorisation is terminated by you.

Cash Donation

This programme DOES NOT allow us to accept cash donations.

Personal Data

All personal data collected, used and disclosed under this Direct Debit Donor Programme is managed by Assisi Palliative Care Bhd and its fundraising partners, in accordance to the Personal Data Protection Act 2010.

We will use this information in order to:

- > administer your account with us;
- > process donations made by you and orders or applications submitted by you;
- > send you information and call you with regards to our events, programmes, services and fundraising;
- > verify your identity;
- > carry out donor profile analysis and make improvements to our organization's operations;
- > obtain your view or comments about our programmes and services; and
- > help us plan fundraising and/or other activities.

This authorisation will remain in force until terminated by written notice sent to Assisi Palliative Care Bhd, and upon receipt of your revocation in writing to Assisi Palliative Care Bhd or by phone call to Assisi Palliative Care Bhd and acknowledgement of the same.

Upon request, we will provide you access and will correct any error or omission in your personal data. No information, in whole or in part, in its paper or electronic format, will be disclosed, used, modified or reproduced for any other person or organisation, except in connection with these purposes stated.

Make a pledge today.
Be a Friend of ASPAC

RM30 is the minimum cost borne by us for visiting and treating ONE patient per day.



Left to Right: ASPAC Counsellor visiting a patient. | Touch Therapy for patient by ASPAC team members. | ASPAC Pet Therapy dog (Arthur) visiting a young patient at home.

Your kind contribution
 will enable us to continue providing
 quality hospice home care to our patients.

About us...

Assisi Palliative Care Berhad (ASPAC) is a charitable, not-for-profit organization that provides hospice-at-home palliative care services covering areas up to 40 km in distance from our centre in Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

The home care team comprises of doctors, nurses, a counsellor and Volunteers and is supported by administrative staff.

We provide FREE care for patients with advanced cancer and for those with progressive non-cancer illnesses e.g end-stage organ failure, etc. Patients are accepted via referrals by the attending doctor.

Our mission is to empower people to live with dignity & hope whilst coping with illness & loss by providing quality medical care, spiritual and psychosocial support.