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St Luke's Hospital  
2 Bukit Batok Street 11  
Singapore 659674  
Co. Reg. No.: 199205095C  
Tel : 6563 2281  
Fax : 6561 8205  
Email : [general@slh.org.sg](mailto:general@slh.org.sg)

We welcome your views and prayer support.  
Please drop us a line if you would like to find  
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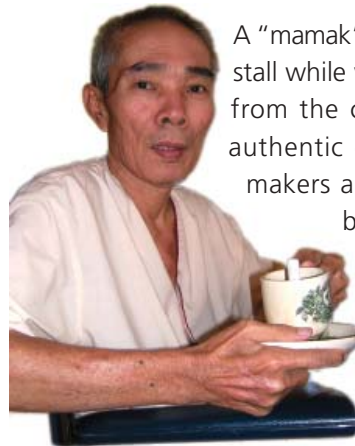
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## Therapy in a coffeeshop

On one humid afternoon, part of St Luke's Hospital was transformed into a "kopitiam" reminiscent of the 1960s.



*Enjoying my cuppa: A patient sips his favourite kopi-o and listens to familiar oldies.*

A "mamak" in a sarong tended the stall while waitresses took orders from the customers. Kopi-o in authentic cups from tin coffee makers and fragrant kaya and butter roti toasted from traditional charcoal pits were served. The scent of toasted bread wafted in the air, accompanied by the sound of oldies sung by Zhou Xuan.

The kopitiam was packed with more than 20 customers, who were in fact patients having a new experience of having their afternoon tea through a diversional therapy programme.

One patient said, "I usually have tea in the ward or in the balcony. But today, I came here with other patients, and eat kaya roti and drink kopi-o. I also love the music they play."

Patient Sin Lye Kim relished the roti so much she even asked for a second helping. "The roti is very good, not too burnt. It's like what I buy from the hawker centre near my house. So nice!"

Diversional therapy activities are designed to support, challenge and enhance the psychological, spiritual, social, emotional and physical well-being of individuals who experience barriers to participation in leisure and recreational pursuits.

Through this activity, the hospital's Diversional Therapy Committee hopes to promote self-esteem and personal fulfillment among the patients.

Senior Nurse Manager Christina Choy, a committee member, felt that such therapy gives patients a chance

to interact with others and help them adapt to a different environment.

"The kopitiam theme is appropriate as most patients can identify with the setting. We had overwhelming response for this programme," said Christina.

Christina and her team paid attention to every small detail, down to using charcoal pits to toast the roti instead of the electrical toaster.



*Busy at work: A nurse dressed up as a "traditional mamak" and serves up delicious beverages.*

## Diversional therapy

Diversional therapy was designed to divert patients away from their present state or problems for example by playing games or shopping. Its aim is to encourage patients to think positively and increase their sense of independence.

As part of the diversion, therapies are usually held in recreational areas, outside the wards.

Patients who participate in diversional therapy are also encouraged to make their own decisions.

# Say "NO" to burnout

By Dr Chia Tee Hien

**B**urnout is a state of mental and/or physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress.

When a caregiver feels burnout, there is a general feeling of lack of control or that there is no purpose in life. Burnout is characterised by a sense of burden; as if there is always an impending chore.

## Burnout occurs in several stages:

- The caregiver may be constantly irritable and anxious, and suffer from insomnia or chronic headache.
- As the condition worsens, the caregiver may become socially withdrawn and plunge into a prolonged spell of sadness and mental fatigue.
- Without proper rest, the caregiver may suffer from depression and even feel suicidal.

Caregivers who are at risk include those who have been under intense and sustained pressure, especially in the face of additional commitments. Those who have been giving prolonged emotional support to family members may also be victims of burnout.

To avoid being burnout, caregivers should learn to say "no". There is a limit to physical and mental energy, so caregivers must ensure they have a balance between caring and resting.

Caregivers must recognise early symptoms of burnout and take appropriate action. Join a support group where sharing and ventilation can help to reduce stress.

Relaxation, holidays, delegating work and pursuing hobbies are excellent ways to reverse the impact of burnout. Also, caregivers must always ensure they lead a healthy lifestyle.

Finally, if symptoms of burnout persist in spite of taking adequate rest and break, caregivers need to consult a doctor to exclude depression and the need for treatment. Caregivers may also need to arrange for alternate care of their loved ones either on a short term or long term basis.

## About the writer

*Dr Chia Tee Hien joined St Luke's Hospital in February 2005 as a Senior Medical Officer. He graduated with an M.B.B.S. from the National University of Singapore (NUS) and found his personal interest in geriatric medicine, particularly in view of the ageing population. In 1995, he obtained his Master of Medicine (Family Medicine) from NUS. Dr Chia is drawn to St Luke's Hospital because of its multidisciplinary and holistic approach towards geriatric medicine. He is married to his lovely wife of seven years and they have three children, age one, three and five. In his free time, he likes to seek out investment instruments with his financial consultant and gourmet hunt all over Singapore with his family.*



## St Luke's Helpline Take a break

Caregivers' responsibilities may come suddenly without warning. That is why it is important for caregivers to take a short rest or respite. **Medical Social Worker Karen Ang** of St Luke's Hospital answers some common questions asked by caregivers.

### Q: What are the advantages of taking respite?

A: The most significant advantage of taking respite is that caregivers have a chance to recharge their physical and emotional reserves. This way, they will be more energetic and refreshed when caring for the elderly or sick.

Another advantage of taking respite is that caregivers may carry out other activities while leaving those they care for in the good hands of medical and nursing staff.

### Q: How often should I rest from caregiving and how long should I rest each time?

A: The frequency and duration of respite for individuals vary. For some

people, taking a break by strolling every morning is enough. Some need to go away for a short trip every month to recharge, while there are those who take holidays only once a year.

To recharge properly, caregivers are encouraged to take a respite of about two to three weeks at least once a year. This way, they can have more energy to provide better quality care for the sick.

### Q: Where are some places that offer respite care?

A: Respite in institutions like community hospitals and nursing homes provide stay-in respite care. For example, St Luke's Hospital accepts admissions for caregivers who wish to take a break for about two weeks to a month. The respite care



offered at St Luke's Hospital is beneficial for families when maids are the caregivers. When the maids have to return home for holidays, the elderly can be put into the hospital's care.

Other respite care facilities include day care centres like St Luke's Eldercare, where the elderly are cared for in the day and return home for the night. In this case, caregivers do their household chores or other activities in the day.

If you are a caregiver and wish to take a respite, you may admit your care into St Luke's Hospital while you take a break.  
Please call 65632281 for more information.

# Rest well and care well

Hamdi Bin Mustaffa, a caregiver for four years, has this advice for fellow caregivers: when you care out of love, you will have the strength. And rest for the caregiver is not a luxury, it is a need.

Hamdi's father, Mustaffa Bin Haji Ahmad, had suffered a major stroke in 2000. The family was plunged into stress and confusion. Among the many challenges was the matter of who could care for Mustaffa.

After much discussion, the family decided to look after their father, not nursing homes or maids.

Hamdi became Mustaffa's main caregiver. He began his caregiver training when Mustaffa was warded at St Luke's Hospital for three months.

"The caregiver training taught me very important things about caring for my father and prepared me mentally for what to expect when I bring him home" said Hamdi.

He learnt from the nurses how to care for his father, such as how to move, clean and feed him. The nurses and doctors also

gave him tips on what he could expect in years to come, and where to find suppliers of mattresses and commode chairs.

The first six months of having Mustaffa back home was stressful. Hamdi took care of his father everyday and became physically and mentally worn out.

Seeing how tired his brother was, Hamdi's youngest brother Abdul Jabar told him to take a break.

The other siblings took turns to care for their father. For the first time in six months, Hamdi took a short holiday with his family. He felt refreshed and energetic when he came back. He became more patient and efficient when caring for Mustaffa.

"Family support is very important because they share your concerns and burdens. You know you can take a break and yet feel a sense of peace," said Hamdi.

Now, there is a roster drawn up and each sibling knows when they are supposed to care for Mustaffa. As the main caregiver, Hamdi also makes sure he takes



*A father's unconditional love is reciprocated when his child loves him back.*

a proper break every month to refresh and recharge.

Besides drawing up a proper plan for caregiving and financing, Hamdi said that it helps when a caregiver takes a proactive approach to seek out information. When he was met with a difficult situation, like when his father developed a severe rash on his hands, Hamdi immediately called the nurses of St Luke's Hospital for help and advice.

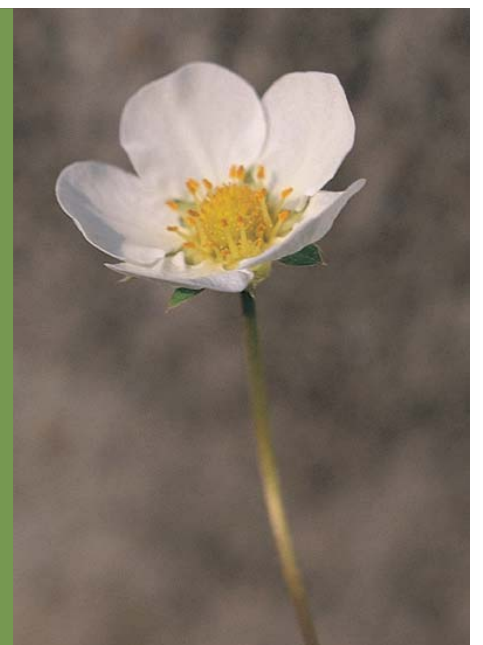
"Now, people are calling me for tips on caregiving!" said Hamdi with a laugh.

## A caregiver's prayer

*The complexities and demands of caregiving take enormous strength. You know the physical strength I need to do my work; You know the emotional strength I need to remain steadfast; You know the spiritual strength I need to have hope and not despair.*

*You are my Source of all the kinds of special strength I need. Show me Your strength as You support me in the large things; assure me of Your strength as You encourage me in the small things.*

(Source: "For Caregivers With Love by Greta Rey)



# Learning and serving

There is a shortage of medical staff in Singapore and the demand for trained nurses continues to remain high.

As nurses play a major role in caring for patients, St Luke's Hospital has been active in recruiting and training local and foreign nurses, and exposing students to the field of nursing.

## Practical attachment

St Luke's Hospital hosted 15 nursing students from the National Institute of Technical Education Course (NITEC) for the first time this year.

In this practical attachment program, students were stationed at various wards for three weeks in March 2005. For student Sujithra P. Nair, the experience was more than she could ever asked for or imagined.

"It was a real eye-opener for me as I was actually allowed to be involved, rather than just being a by-stander," said Sujithra. She helped in two emergency cases, including a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Sister Susie Goh, Acting Director of Nursing at St Lukes Hospital, is confident that the training provided will benefit the students. "We have professional nursing staff who are certified trainers by the Institute of Technical Education, and we hold it as our responsibility to train and educate."

## Diploma sponsorship

Sumasni Claudia Palasekaran has graduated with a Diploma in Nursing after a three-year course at Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP).

The hospital had sponsored her studies there, with a subsequent service bond to the hospital. It was

a win-win situation for both. Claudia was motivated with the sponsorship to excel in school, and St Luke's Hospital is blessed with a dedicated nurse.

Being the first nursing student sponsored by St Luke's Hospital, Claudia was grateful for the chance to learn from the staff. "At St Luke's Hospital, I am given more time to interact with patients. The pace of learning here is good, and I benefit from training on the job."

Five other nurses will also join St Luke's Hospital under a different programme. These students are diploma holders or graduates who are seeking a new career in nursing. Under the Accelerated Diploma in Nursing course, the students will receive training in nursing and are bonded for three years with St Luke's Hospital.

The students were attached to the hospital for practical training and assigned buddy nurses from St Luke's Hospital as their mentors.

## Approved training centre

St Luke's Hospital was also recently accredited by the Institute of Technical Education as an Approved Training Centre for its staff.

With this status, the hospital is able to train and upgrade staff, especially nursing aides. Staff who are passionate about upgrading their skills in nursing care may be recruited into the 120-hour course. At the end of the course, they earn an ITE Skills Certificate in Health Care (Home Care). The first batch of 10 students were selected and placed into the programme from 11 April this year.

"This is an excellent opportunity for staff to be pro-active in learning. It is also a chance for us to impart our skills so that more will benefit, including the patients," said Sister Susie Goh.



St Luke's Hospital sponsored Claudia for her diploma course in nursing. Now she is qualified to render care to others.



## Double happiness

The Head of Medical Services of St Luke's Hospital, Dr Tan Boon Yeow, has been appointed as an adjunct assistant professor in the Department of Community, Occupational & Family Medicine at the National University of Singapore with effect from March 2005. He is teaching and taking part in research during this appointment, in recognition of his skills in family medicine.

# From young to old

About 160 children, aged four to six, from Pasir Ris Bethesda Kindergarten visited elderly patients at St Luke's Hospital during Chinese New Year. The children sang, danced, gave mandarin oranges and spread cheer to patients. While singing, the children walked around and shook the patients' hands. The children also donated their hong baos to the hospital's Patient Welfare Fund, which is used to help the needy patients.

*It is a blessing to give: Presenting the hong baos and mandarin oranges to St Luke's Hospital.*



*Joyful voices: Children bringing happiness to the patients.*

## Hong Bao Project

Every year, St Luke's Hospital appeals to schools and educational institutions in Singapore for donations during Chinese New Year. The hospital appeals to the students to remember those in need while they are receiving hong baos from their relatives.

Since the Hong Bao Project started in 1997, the funds collected have benefited many

patients who require financial assistance through the Patient Welfare Fund. The money helps patients pay hospital bills, transportation charges, or to buy assistive devices such as wheelchairs or walking frames.

This year, participants from 26 kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, junior colleges and higher learning institutions and a corporation raised more than \$47,000 for the patients.

# Sweet ending to Bittersweet concert

St Luke's patients were treated to a showcase of musical, dancing and artistic talents recently. Violin soloists mesmerised with pieces by Pablo de Sarasate. An instrumental ensemble played a medley of well-liked Andrew Lloyd Webber classics. Vocalists presented soulful renditions. Dancers moved to an exotic mix of Western and Asian melodies.

And a comic choir whimsically described diseased animals' thoughts with bizarre twists to the piece "Oh Happy Days", complete with artistically painted wall murals and colourful stage costumes.

The occasion was a fundraising concert in aid of St Luke's Hospital, the fifth in a series. The performers were graduating Secondary 4 students of Methodist Girls School (MGS). This year's event was a concerted effort from three classes, Secondary 4A1, 4A2 and 4A3, instead of one class as was the case in previous years. Singapore Idol finalist Daphne Khoo also made a guest appearance and performed together with the students.

Over five months of sweat and tears and in the midst of heavy academic and non-academic commitments, the concert, titled Bittersweet Symphony, was a two-night event on 15 and 16 April and raised more than \$58,000.

"The concert is centred on the theme of hope", said Jemma Ho, chairman of the organizing committee. "Hope for a better world, better



*A heartfelt giving: A patient beaming with joy as she receives a gift from Ms Kon.*

relationships, and better lives". Indeed, hope was beaming from the faces of St Luke's patients as they left the concert, each clutching a teddy bear presented by MGS principal, Ms Kon Mei Leen.



## Thank you, Wesley!

During a special offering at Wesley Methodist Church on 27 March, 2005, a sum of more than S\$180,000 were raised for the patients of St Luke's Hospital.

*"So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver."  
(2 Corinthians 9:7, NKJV)*

We are grateful for the continued, cheerful giving from members of Wesley Methodist Church.



## Continuing Education Programme 2005

Venue : Multi-Purpose Hall  
St. Luke's Hospital  
2 Bukit Batok Street 11  
Singapore 659674  
Tel : 65632281  
Fax : 65618205  
Time : 1 – 2pm  
Contact : Florence Ho (ext 279)

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
5 Jul	Psychotic problems in the elderly	Dr Tan Lay Ling
2 Aug	Oral and dental health in the elderly	Dr Neo Tee Khin
6 Sep	Ethical issues in the dying elderly	A/Prof Pang Weng Sun
4 Oct	Management of hyperlipidemia in the elderly	Dr Tarvintharan Subramaniam
8 Nov	Overview of neuro-rehabilitation	Dr Karen Chua Sui Geok

## In-Service Educational Programme

Venue : Multi-Purpose Hall  
St. Luke's Hospital  
Contact : Monica Michael (ext 220)

DATE	TOPIC	SPEAKER
13 Sep 1 – 2pm	Infection Control & MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus)	Dr Brenda Ang
15 Nov 8 – 9am 12.30 – 1.30pm 2.45 – 3.45pm	Protect yourself from sharp injuries and exposure	Infection Control Nurse



Brush

# Stroke

In Chinese calligraphy, the brush stroke shows the character of the writer and his relationship with the world. The stroke can be swift and hard, or it can be gentle and smooth.

Can you see the beauty?

For stroke patients, it comes swiftly and leaves a permanent mark, physically and psychologically. The process of recovery is challenging. But the patient can overcome the condition with the help of family and the society, and discover in the process, strength of character and bonding in relationships.

**Stroke Club SLH**, a partnership of St Luke's Hospital with Singapore National Stroke Association, provides a platform for stroke survivors, families and caregivers to meet and learn how to deal with the condition.

We invite speakers and stroke survivors to share their knowledge and experience.

### Come join the Stroke Club SLH

Every last Saturday of the month, from 9.30am to 11.30am at St Luke's Hospital conference room.

Date	Topic	Speaker
25 Jun	Nutrition in the preventive care for stroke patients	Ms Kalpana (Nutritionist)
30 Jul	All about stroke	Ms Namrata (Physiotherapist)
27 Aug	It's OK to say "No"	Ms Wang Jing (Social Worker)

Attendance is **FREE OF CHARGE** and light refreshment is provided for all.

For enquiries and/or registration please call Magdalene Choo at 68953203 or email [magdalenechoo@slh.org.sg](mailto:magdalenechoo@slh.org.sg)

