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Far-reaching impacts on promoting advance directive to citizens, clinicians and clients**Carmen W H Chan**

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Background: The use of advance directives has been advocated in Western countries for over 20 years. In America, it is mandatory to ask admitted patients if they have advance directives under the Patient Self-Determination Act since 1991. In Hong Kong, little has been done about promoting advance directive in the health care context. Patients, family members and sometimes health care professionals still refrain from discussing dying and advance directives.

Aim: The aim of this knowledge transfer project was to promote public awareness and appreciation of the benefits of advance directive.

Methods: Phase-1 of the project included 8 road-shows to disseminate the philosophy and advertise the services available regarding advance directive to 2800 citizens in the community in Hong Kong. Participants were given sets of the promotional materials (pamphlet and VCD) and completed a brief counseling and survey. Phase-2 of the project involved a 2-day training workshop for 58 home care nurses and doctors on advance care planning and advance directives.

Result: The projects were evaluated by a pre-test post-test design in 108 clients under the care of these 58 health care professionals. Their understanding and active participation in a written advance director was increased. Family members reported improved scores in a family satisfaction scale and the hospital readmission rate was also improved. The study also stimulates public debate on a legislative form of advance directive in newspaper, forum and hospital authority committee.

Conclusion: The project has increased the community's awareness of and interest in the available right of advance directive when a person is facing a life-limiting disease and encourages more openness in preparing for a good death.

Biography

Carmen W H Chan focuses on the promotion of advance care planning and advance directives and targets on cancer patients, pediatric patients, older adults and the general public. Her research initiatives on this area have demonstrated excellence in design and innovation and a great impact on the health care profession and the society. She has recently launched another large-scale population survey on the acceptance and completion of advance directive among the common people in Hong Kong.

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