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醫心 • MEDICAL
OUTREACHERS

Newsletter Fall 2012

HONG KONG



Outreaching; that is our main notion. Through adventuring outside of our comfort zone to reach out to the needed, we believe we could cultivate our passion and devotion in the practice of medicine. Let our flame not be diminished, but rather, spread to our neighbouring friends. It is that simple.

Outreach /v. ,aʊt'ritʃ/; n., adj. 'aʊt,ritʃ/ To reach beyond; surpass.

This has been a busy and productive year for Medical Outreachers! The Annual Summer Trip co-organized by Green Action Charity Foundation, Operation Concern, and also with Amity Foundation this year, has continued to be our yearly highlight. In addition, the collaborations established since last year with Chi Heng Foundation, the Hong Kong Red Cross, Operation Smile China, and the Hong Kong Medical Mobilization Corporation (HKMMC) have also continued to yield fruit. This year our long and short trips added together have enabled a record high number of medical students from both universities to participate in eye-opening and unforgettable service and learning trips to the mainland. Locally, we have made good progress in seeking out service opportunities that stress on "continuity" as well. Besides carrying on with the popular Palliative Care Programme at Grantham Hospital, our volunteers have also begun two long-term outreach projects that are targeted at the elderly, co-organized with Wong Cho Tong District Elderly Centre and Mong Kok Kai Fong Association, respectively. Feedback has been so positive that we have even received an overwhelming number of applications for upcoming events! A number of sharing sessions were also held this past year in the two universities. These provided rare chances for our participants to have heart-to-heart dialogues with representatives of our collaborating NGOs, prominent figures in the medical field, and also an HIV patient in one instance.

We would like to thank all those who have supported MO continuously, including those who may or may not have had the chance to participate in our trips and service programmes, and especially those returning for the second, third (or nth) time as volunteers. Special thanks must also be given to all our collaborating NGOs, without whom our service opportunities would not have existed at all. We are also most grateful for the support from the two medical faculties, HKU Li Ka Shing Faculty of Medicine, and CUHK Faculty of Medicine. Do continue to support MO and its cause, and may the flame of passion and devotion go on to spread like a wild fire!

Antonia Castilho (MBChB/3)
President 2011-2012

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Local Projects

Continuous Home Visits to solitary elderly

Co-organized with Wong Cho Tong District Elderly Centre, the yearlong outreaching home visit program has provided an opportunity for medical students to understand the life of solitary elderly. The participant's role is not just limited to providing basic health-related education. They have provided psychological support to the solitary elderly and encouraged them to actively interact with society, updating them about

current affairs. While this may sound simple, communicating with the solitary elderly actually requires skillful communication techniques and participants have to be very observant and sensitive to find out any underlying problems of the elderly. Importantly, participants will be visiting the same elderly persons throughout the year. It is hoped that gradual changes will be appreciable in these elderly persons, a meaningful and rewarding process for the participants

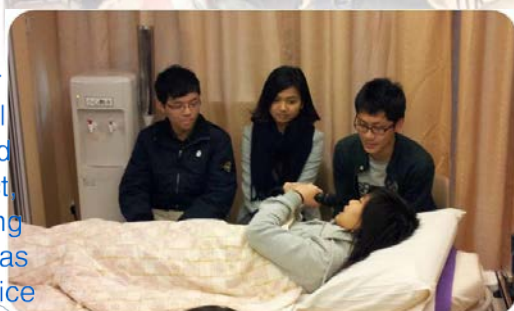
Searching for the elderly in need

A lot of positive feedback has been received from medical students who took part in the monthly events co-organized with Mong Kok Kai Fong Association (MKKFA). These events involve home visits and blood pressure measurements on Saturday mornings, normally lasting for 3 hours. Participants are grouped in pairs, and assigned to elderly residents of one building in Mongkok. Unlike the yearlong project with Wong Cho Tong Elderly Centre, the MKKFA monthly events are one-off

and participants are given the chance to visit different individuals each time. The participants have been repeatedly surprised at how much the elderly are concerned about their health. They were frequently asked extensively on different body systems – this could be very challenging, especially to junior medical students! Participants have even had to 'take history' when they came across alarming symptoms or worrying conditions – undoubtedly a solid practical experience for medical students!

Caring for the terminal patients

The Palliative Care Programme, with visits held around once a month since last year, is co-organized by Grantham Hospital and Medical Outreachers. Through this programme, students have the opportunity to visit terminally ill patients, to listen to their feelings and then the support they need in their end-of-life care. It also includes a workshop and sharing sessions by doctors working at the hospice. This programme has provided a unique opportunity to practice the art of communicating with patients, to understand their needs and to reflect upon how a healthcare workers' attitude can make a difference to a dying person – the type of clinical exposure that a pre-clinical medical student would rarely get.



Sharing Sessions

As in previous years, Medical Outreachers has organized 3 seminars this year, featuring two “extra-medical life” sharings by Professor KY Yuen from the University of Hong Kong and Dr. Ray Leung from the Chinese University of Hong Kong; as well as a seminar given by speakers from AIDS concern.

Speakers from AIDS concern updated the medical students on the symptoms, underlying pathology, prognosis and current treatments of AIDS. The highlight of the seminar was a sharing made by an HIV carrier. His touching speech had a huge influence on the audience. The sharing of his experience of being treated inferiorly in public hospitals brought to light the issue of discriminations against HIV/AIDS in society.

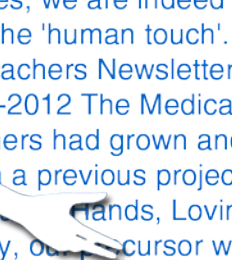
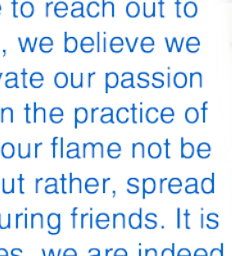
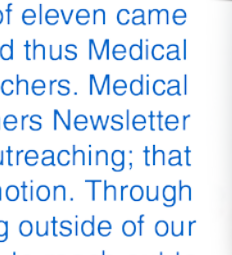
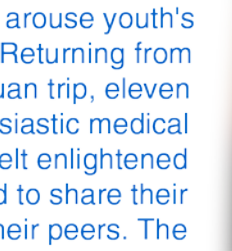
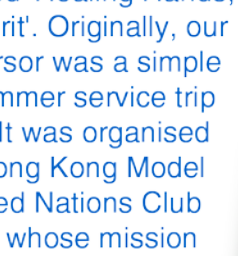
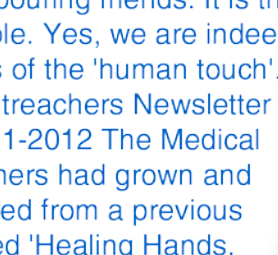
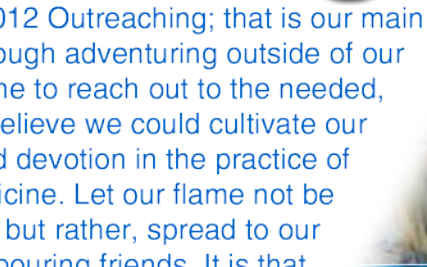
Dr. Ray Leung gave his sharing at the time when he was a fresh graduate from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, working in the Prince of Wales Hospital. He is a popular icon among CUHK medical students, well known for his ‘life-saving’

examination question “sources”. The seminar was a huge success and participants were eager to have all their questions answered. Dr. Leung’s optimistic nature was particularly inspiring. Participants had a better sense of career orientation and learnt the right attitude to face the tough road ahead.

Professor KY Yuen, a microbiologist from Queen Mary Hospital, HKU, has been well-known as one of the “SARS heroes”. During his sharing he encouraged students to raise any question they wanted to – and these were certainly not confined to medicine and academia. Those who attended left not only with a better understanding of Prof Yuen as a person, and his views on life, but were profoundly stunned by his knowledge, Intelligence, and versatility, but above all, wisdom. For Prof Yuen, one of the keys to his wisdom was curiosity towards all things in life. As Albert Einstein once said, “The most important step in arriving at the right answer is to ask the right question.”



Regional



Annual Trip 2012

Medical Outreachers Hong Kong together with three other NGOs, namely Amity Foundation, Green Action Charity Foundation and Operation Concern co-organized the 2012 annual trip between 2nd June and 12th June. A total of twenty-six medical students from both the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong participated in the two parts of the trip.



In the first part, ten students visited Gansu (甘肅) with Amity Foundation, with the aim of learning about the healthcare system in rural China, and in particular, the role that small-scale local village clinics play in the whole healthcare system.



During the same time, another six students travelled to Shaanxi (陝西) with Operation Concern, to shadow orthopedic surgeons. Not only did they see the surgical procedures, but they also witnessed the caring and the attention that the surgeons paid to the families.

In the second part of the trip, another ten students then joined with the sixteen from the first part to volunteer at an optometry center in Dongshan (東山), hosted by Green Action Charity Foundation. This part of the trip gave students the opportunity to appreciate the impact of China's population policy on a typical remote village in the Guangdong Province. For the very first time, video footage was shot during this trip, featuring Dongshan's villagers, Green Action's officials, and also our participants. Refinement of this video is now underway, as a conclusion of this visit, and the video will portray how Dongshan's children are



pushed into a never-ending cycle of poverty by their lack of opportunities in life, and the role that Green Action is taking to attempt to reverse the situation.

We would hereby like to thank all who responded to our appeal for the donation of toys and books to the children of Dongshan! Your contributions were received with great joy and will certainly be treasured for years to come.



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Trip to AIDS/HIV impacted villages

2012

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“另外在智愛一家第一次親身接觸愛滋病患者，與那些小朋友玩，發覺其實他們沒病發的時候跟正常人沒有大分別，更比我們精力充沛，希望愛滋病患者受到歧視的問題會隨著時間和教育漸漸改善！”

Debbie So, HKU MBBS 2015

This summer trip was co-organized by Medical Outreachers Hong Kong and Chi Heng Foundation from 25th July to 4th August, in Fuyang (阜陽), Anhui and rural areas nearby. A total of eleven medical students from both HKU and CUHK participated in the trip.

In the trip, students from Hong Kong cooperated with mainland university students recruited by Chi Heng to do home visits to children of HIV-positive parents and hold classes for

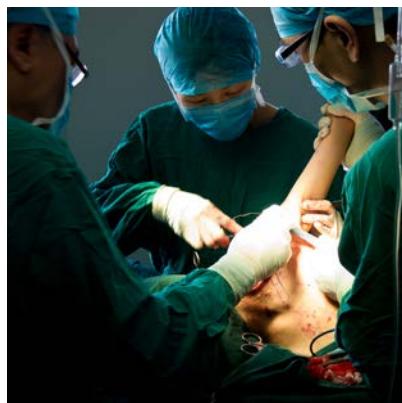
children living in HIV-impacted villages.

Through these services, students got a glimpse of how an NGO runs to maintain sustainability and to assess the needs of different subsidized students in the setting of rural China. Students also got a taste of rural village life through homestay. More importantly, they lived out the example of interacting with HIV-carriers in a discrimination-free way, and all-in-all, gained a tough yet unforgettable experience with their mainland buddies!



Operation Concern: Burns and Contractures

During the Easter holidays, ten participants from both HKU and CUHK followed a team of doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers from Operation Concern, led by Prof. P.C. Leung and Prof. L.K. Hung, to Fuping for 7 days. With Operation Concern's main focus on orthopedics, participants were able to experience surgery, ward rounds, consultation as well as rehabilitation work. In addition, they attended lectures on burns and contractures. They learnt about the differences between the medical conditions in China and Hong Kong. As mentioned by Prof. Leung, many cases there would not happen in Hong Kong, especially those severe ones.



Apart from medical-related activities, participants also visited a few village households. They had chances to talk with villagers and to see how an NGO evaluated their needs. They also gained insight into the interrelationship between socioeconomic condition and diseases – oftentimes they came across villagers who had delayed diagnosis and inadequate treatment due to the lack of money.

Last but not least, those who took part in the trip could appreciate the passion of Operation Concern, which has already worked in the region for 19 years. It is never

easy to run an NGO. We would like to thank Operation Concern as well as Prof. Leung and Prof. Hung for letting us take part in such a fruitful trip and we hope to have more chances to cooperate with Operation Concern in the future.



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Cataract Surgeries

Green Action Charity Foundation (力行植林慈善基金會) is one of the NGOs that Medical Outreachers has long been working with. Throughout last year, around thirty volunteers, each time in pairs, have joined their trips to observe cataract surgeries.

The trip is comprised of 2 parts, namely screening and surgery. Volunteers will be recruited to assist doctors and nurses in conducting ophthalmic check-ups, facilitate the smooth running of the programme, and extend care to the elderly being

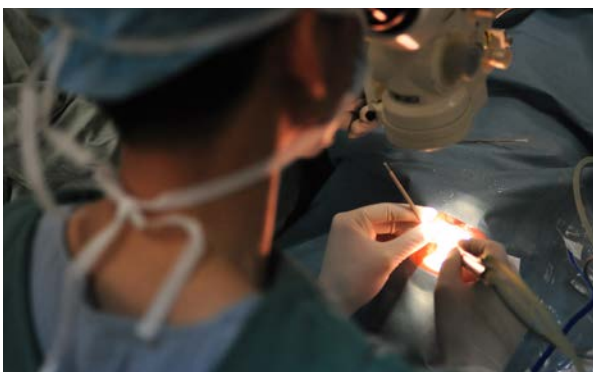
screened. They may also have the chance to observe surgeries performed by doctors from a local eye hospital, as well as getting a glimpse of how a small-scaled non-governmental organisation (NGO) mobilises to improve the lives of people living in poverty.



'This was our first screening site (for those who are eligible for the cataract surgery) and that morning alone, more than 200 patients were being checked.'



婆婆看不到，孩子總在身邊攙扶著，大老遠走來陪媽媽做手術。婆婆聽不到，孩子總是大聲地叫喚著，場面卻是溫馨感人。



來到旅程的最後一天，一同分享喜悅：由登記、洗眼，到開刀，直至最後說：「睇到呀！多謝你啊」我不禁打從心底裡微笑。:) 太陽眼鏡是力行為病人預備的禮物，用來保護眼睛，他們戴起來真的很帥！

Shadow Ng, CUHK MBChB 2016

Wenchuan Rehab

Red Cross has been devoted to rehabilitation work in Wenchuan, Sichuan ever since the disastrous earthquake there in 2008. Orthopaedic surgeons have been sent every two weeks to perform surgeries, mainly to correct deformations and complications resulting from previous life-saving procedures that were done at the wake of the earthquake. This year, in 4 separate trips, a total of 13 medical students have visited Wenchuan, led by Dr. Poon, who was presented with the Hong Kong Humanity Award in recognition of his dedication to the rehabilitation work in Sichuan.

Here are some of their comments towards their trips, "As time passes, people seem to have forgotten those who have suffered physically and more importantly, psychologically from the earthquake"; "This trip has reminded me of the mission of a doctor - it is not the treatment that cures, but the care from doctors." "I encountered an old man who had a blood pressure too high for operation, but after Dr. Poon's comforting words and his promise to perform the old man's operation the week after, great joy and relief came over his face - a huge contrast with the worry it was filled with originally."; "Doctors do play an extremely important role in others' life — in the way that a single decision made by doctors or even small words of care from doctors may change one's life forever".



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Operation Smile

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Operation Smile is an international charity that aims to change the lives of children born with cleft lips and palate. With the help of medical volunteers, Operation Smile provides free surgery to all children in need, regardless of their monetary status.

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In collaboration with Operation Smile, Medical Outreachers has sent participants on service trips to different provinces in China in the past two years, during which participants could contribute by acting as translators between international medical professionals and Mandarin-speaking doctors. At the same time, our participants gained valuable first-hand experience not only in observing the cleft lip condition and treatment, but the situation in Chinese hospitals as

well. Participants also had the chance to assist the medical professionals in the screening process and in the operation theatre during surgeries, or even experience night shifts for post-operation care.

Participants reflected that they have learnt a lot after joining trips with Operation Smile – and what really makes the trip really worthwhile is to see the children's brilliant smiles after their life-changing surgery.



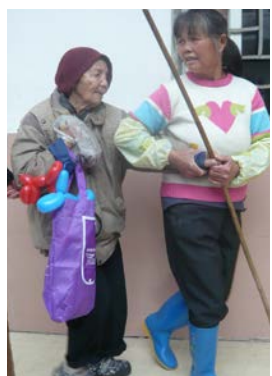
見證一個又一個小朋友重生，一個又一個家庭因此而獲得喜樂，復活節最為應節的活動，莫過於此。
 謝志峰 (香港大學內外全科醫學五年級)

Leprosy Village Visits

Not everyone in this world is treated fairly. Some people get a disease which causes permanent damage to their skin and makes their fingers fall off, leaving them looking terrible. Owing to a low general awareness of the disease, leprosy patients are often thought to be highly infectious, and are stigmatized by society, even by the government. Decades ago, leprosy villages were set up in many places in China to isolate these patients, even after they were cured. It is a miserable story that these leprosy villagers have to spend the rest of



This year, we have visited the same leprosy village in Haudu, Guangzhou three times, with the aim of giving continuous care, and to gain a deeper understanding of the villagers' needs. Our volunteers shared a great time with the villagers through games,



The old lady with a woolen hat has lost her vision. Every day, she walks with one hand holding onto the ridge on the wall and one hand with a wooden stick in detecting any obstacles with ease. She is also one of the patients who suffered from leprosy 30 years ago hence living in the village. As a medical student, there was not much that I could help to improve her current situation. Yet an hour of chat brought her a moment of joy.

他因為意外跌倒入院，經常受痛楚折磨，從對話中我感覺到他很悲觀，有少許生無可戀的感覺。後來談到他有養狗，其中一隻更剛生了可愛的狗嬰兒，說着說着，伯伯臉上亦擠出了笑容。原來有時候我們只是做很少的東西，可能只是數個年輕人花一天的時間去探望他們跟他們閒聊，就可以令他們重拾生氣，可以有很大的影響。這再次令我感受到生命是互燃的。

Monkey Ma, CUHK MBChB 2016

their lives in the isolated villages, with no family members willing to visit them.

Some years ago, the Hong Kong Medical Mobilization Corporation (HKMMC), an NGO set up by Christians, began visiting these leprosy colonies, providing companionship, basic medical care, and even welfare services like hair-cutting, to the isolated villagers. Accompanied by these experienced volunteers, Medical Outreachers has also been making regular one-day trips to them since last year.



teaching them basic hand hygiene and fall-prevention exercises, and doing some simple health checks like BP measurement for them. Moreover, we have begun compiling a health record to keep track of the villagers' health in the long term.

Rose G. E. Au, HKU MBBS 2014



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