

Outstanding Doctor Save Life of Father

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
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On the media, we have seen moving images. One was of a middle-aged man using a large cloth to carry in his arms his mother who cannot walk on her own; he took her to the Chi Mei Hospital in Tainan for an examination. When people on the side of the road saw such a filial man, they took photographs and posted these moving images on the Internet.

When I saw them, I thought of what the Master Cheng Yen is constantly reminding us: “doing good deeds cannot wait”. Often we see parents comforting their children. But to see a middle-aged man carrying his thin and weak mother in his arms – that was a first for me.

Separately, I saw the case of someone who had for a long time been suffering from pain in her trigeminal nerve. For many years, she had been seeking the help of doctors everywhere but had been unable to find the necessary treatment. Finally, due to a good destiny, she found a doctor who was able to end the pain she had suffered for so long.

These two cases made think of a case in my own experience. It was one day more than a month ago, when the clinic was crowded with people. It was half way through the clinic when suddenly someone pushed a piece of paper on which was written at the top: “our father is in the final stages of pancreatic cancer. When you see him, please could not discuss this directly in front of him.” This unusual message made a deep impression on me.

When the time came for the appointment, the children pushed the wheelchair of their father into the surgery, bringing many materials from previous examinations. Their father was 81 years old and had been ill for a considerable time; since he often did not eat, his weight had fallen by 15 kilograms – an obvious sign of jaundice. His children had taken him to other hospitals and learnt of his diagnosis; they decided to bring him to the Tzu Chi hospital in Taipei to listen to our opinion.

According to the material in the earlier diagnosis, the tumor index should not exceed 37, but, in the case of this man, it exceeded 5,000. After a blood examination, we found that the jaundice index was extremely high. In addition, looking at the images on the computer from the scan, we discovered that there was a shadow over the pancreas.

During the course of his treatment, the man also suffered a slight stroke and could only sit in a wheelchair with his head on one side. His children were very filial and also extremely anxious. The large hospital did a thorough examination and told them that their father probably had only one or two months to live. It advised them to go home and make the necessary preparations. But they still retained a final hope in their heart and so brought him to our hospital.

Since it was close to Chinese New Year, registration was not so convenient. So they waited for a long time and finally entered the clinic room. Since it was not convenient to discuss the diagnosis in front of their father, I asked the children to take him outside and come back inside to talk. I looked at all the data and the material from the other doctors; it easily led you to accept

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their diagnosis. But, when I saw the hope in the eyes of the children, I felt that I had to do something to give them some encouragement.

When I saw at the images from the examination, I suddenly remembered something. When I had just graduated, I encountered a similar case. According to the judgment of our professor, the patient could only live one more month. But, several months later, I saw him come to the clinic dressed in a suit; everyone was stunned!

So there was one other possible explanation for this illness – it was a chance in a million. If the patient had a history of drinking large quantities of alcohol, then his pancreas would swell and could cause inflammation. Because the swelling put pressure on the bile duct, it would induce jaundice; this would block passage through the duct and could mistakenly judged as a rise in the cancer index.

The previous doctor had asked the children: “in the past, did your father have a habit of drinking a large amount of alcohol?” They nodded, as if they were a drunk driver arrested. Hearing the possibility of what I said, they were very happy. “Yes, yes, yes ... Father normally drank a large amount of alcohol,” they said.

I told them that there was this possibility and asked him to tell their father not to take any particular medicine but only rest – and drink no alcohol. If the condition had been produced by alcohol, we would take a blood test in a month’s time and the tumor index should have considerably fallen. But, if it were cancer, then it would still be high.

One month later, we saw the results of Father’s blood test. The cancer index had fallen from 5,000 to 500 and there was no trace of jaundice. He could go home and eat normally; his spirits had greatly improved.

The moral of this story is that filial piety can bring good fortune and make people do their best to help others. When a doctor sees a patient, it is like a key turning a lock; it may take a long time but finally he will find the correct way to open the door and dispel our anxieties. So, when a patient has anxieties or pain in his body, he absolutely must not believe some folk remedy but allow the doctor to find a way to resolve the problem. This is the correct choice.

Comment of Master Cheng Yen:

Filial piety and doing good should both bring blessings. The piety of these children is very moving. They were fortunate to meet such a fine person as the doctor who stabilized the illness of their father. We must thank Dr. Chao, superintendent of Taipei Tzu Chi Hospital, a great doctor. Their whole family should thank you deeply.

(Recorded at the Volunteers’ Morning Assembly on March 3, 2012: article prepared by Qiu Lan-feng)