

LEADERSHIP IN HEALTH ORGANISATIONS

Leadership and management in health organisations are essential and frequent topics of discussion among professionals and other staff, who are directly or indirectly involved with the operation of the said organisations. In a hospital setting for example, managers are appointed at different functional or unit levels. Though more often than not, we refer to them as the heads or managers or by any other names, the leadership component might be assumed to be just part but not the most important aspect of their roles. A vivid picture of the typical hospital managers' regular tasks would be like the planning and budgeting meetings they have to chair, listening to the frustrated statements expressed about the lack of staff for the existing services; what more with the plans to expand additional services, thinking about the contractors who had abandoned the projects for additional facilities, wondering how to pacify the chairman of the board of management as a result of the complaints in the local papers... the list goes on.

Leadership is more than management. Leaders set the vision of the organisations they are in charge of, then plan the correct strategies, get the change process going, and produce the results as envisioned. Since leadership is a dynamic process, leaders need to create a balance between the needs of staff members, the divisions within and the organisations' goals.

Are leaders born or made? Need leaders be intelligent, charismatic, trustworthy and adopt specific or a combination of leadership styles to be successful? Leadership style is one of the relevant topics in this issue of JUMMEC. The question asked is whether leadership style and organisational success are inter-related. In a study conducted by Khatijah (1) on the leadership style of three employees with leadership responsibilities in a hospital setting. They are interviewed on leadership behaviours followed by a self administered leadership questionnaire. Each of the participants' colleagues is asked to voluntarily express their perception on his/her leadership style. The individuals want to be transformational but the responses are more characteristic of transactional style. Barriers such as organisational culture, inter-professional dynamics and lack of leadership development are cited as the obstacles. The author concludes on the joint responsibilities for both the employees and the organisation to develop the leadership styles and its facilitation respectively.

Public health initiatives on coping with menopause are recommended and necessary as shown by a study that examines the level of knowledge and perception of menopause among young to middle-aged 15 to 49 years Malaysian women by Wong and Liyana (2). A cross-sectional survey, questionnaire-based is conducted in three randomly chosen districts. The result shows that subjects are aware of the meaning of the term menopause and its symptoms but lacked comprehensive understanding about the health risks associated with menopause. Part of the study looks at the major source of information on menopause where magazines and family members play major roles compared to official sources from health care personnel. The respondents display positive thinking towards menopause though combined with feelings of sadness and nervousness upon its approach.

A cancer predominantly affecting paediatric patients, Rhabdomyosarcoma is reported in an adult by Shanggar, Muhilan, Dublin, *et al* (3). It occupies the bladder producing specific complications. The report covers the unusual CT and macroscopic appearance, followed by the literature review and a discussion on management strategies.

In a case study by Lim and Tan (4), the salvage therapy used for severe Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) is Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIG). The authors highlight the efficacy and safety of high dose IVIG in SLE patients with multi-organ involvement particularly, lupus nephritis and reviewed literature on the usage of IVIG for lupus nephritis. It is recommending for more studies to determine the optimal therapeutic dosage plus the regime for IVIG. Patient groups for therapy need to be identified too.

The trend towards community-based care in psychiatry is reported in this study by Tan, Nor Zuraida, Mohamad Omer *et al* (5). The treatment of schizophrenia through deinstitutionalisation as compared to hospitalised patients reflects a growing trend. This cross-sectional study compares the two groups and measures the levels of depression and function, as depression is prevalent among Schizophrenia patients. The assessment tools used were the Calgary Depression Scale for Schizophrenia (CDSS) and Global Assessment of Functioning scale (GAF). The important finding is that the community-based services is seen to

be more effective than long stay in-patient services in preventing depression and promoting better functional levels.

From clinical medicine on to rehabilitation medicine, the latter comprehensively optimises patients' function and health. International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) by World Health Organization (WHO) is a conceptual framework for assessment of these patients. Lydia and Nazirah (6) describe the applications of ICF at the University of Malaya Medical Centre, Kuala Lumpur. ICF categories though exhaustive are not applicable and practical in entirety and have to be adopted to be usable, especially in research, clinical practice and as tools in education. However, it is agreed to be an essential tool in addressing disability among professionals and for communication between stakeholders.

It has been proven that rectal delivery of drugs is effective in terms of drug absorption and distribution, comparable to other routes. Noordin and Chung (7) developed two new suppository bases using combinations of locally sourced hydrogenated palm kernel oil, hydrogenated palm kernel stearin and hydrogenated palm kernel olein with mixtures of stearic acid and glyceryl monostearate. These bases produce suppositories with acceptable characteristics when combined with aspirin. A study was conducted using the aspirin suppositories on twelve healthy subjects. The authors quantified aspirin from the urine samples (the excretion of salicylic acid) of the subjects to determine the relative availability of the different suppository preparations relative to an oral dose. The results showed that these palm kernel oil blends are suitable suppository bases.

This current issue of *JUMMEC* contains a wide and balanced range of subjects from the study on leadership to clinical and rehabilitation medicine which would be very useful for all readers.

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