

[Hong Kong]

Be Human—Stop child abuse and life style disorders

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In Hong Kong, statistics show a decline of child abuse cases.¹ The Social Welfare Department and the Department of Health work hard to prevent child abuse and violence at different levels, such as strengthening families value through publicity campaigns and public education programs, supporting children with psychological, child care and residential child care services, and educating parents-to-be and parents of infants and small children with information on parenting, child health and positive discipline.

Non-government organizations in Hong Kong also contribute to provide quality child protection programs of both remedial and preventive in nature, for example, establishing hotline services, providing counseling services and community empowerment.

Even with our extensive preventive measures and awareness programs organized in Hong Kong, there are still cases of child abuse that doctors have the duty to diagnose, being alert of all the clues. The children diagnosed of child abuse have to be admitted to public hospitals, reported to the police, and ordered to be separated from the suspected abusers. The abusers would be prosecuted according to the law if there is evidence. Responsible doctors need to assist in the process, to rehabilitate, testify, and even act as witness in Court.

Speaking of life style disorders, drug abuse and alcoholism are issues of every country and city, which are also related to the occurrence of child abuse cases.

Different strategies are adopted to fight against various life style disorders in Hong Kong.

In order to beat drugs, the Hong Kong Medical Association has organized many certificates courses for family doctors in various dis-

tricts to help patients with drug abuse problem, public education programs, including road shows, video and slogan competitions, and publication for educational flyers to promote a drug free community.

Alcoholism is not a huge problem in Hong Kong. A Working Group on Alcohol and Health has been drawn up in the government to create a sustainable environment to reduce burden of alcohol-related harm.

Latest statistics show that the daily cigarette smoking prevalence dropped to 11.1% in 2010, the lowest rate recorded since 1982.² With the effort of Tobacco Control Office of Department of Health, and Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health, Hong Kong aims at a smoke-free culture.

Different strategies are adopted in accordance with the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. They include monitoring of tobacco use, prevention policies, clinics to quit tobacco use, increasing tobacco taxes, legislations on smoke-free indoor environments, and prosecuting smokers against the law, etc.

To manage life style disorders, such as hypertension, obesity and diabetes mellitus, the Department of Health promotes health educations in family, school, workplace and community settings, and publishes relevant Hong Kong Reference Frameworks for patients to raise public awareness.

The Hong Kong Medical Association has organized community service days and cooperation with the Hospital Authority to promote Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension, aiming at better health in community, through health talks and medical check stations; launched

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Healthy 8000 Steps Campaign to encourage daily exercise, and with the Department of Health, implemented the exercise prescription project training doctors and aroused public awareness. I have written theme songs³⁻⁵ to promote public

health educations in these areas.

The Hong Kong Medical Association will continue to fight against child abuse, and do our best to prevent life style disorders.

References

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