

COVID-19 Impact at end-March 2020

Nepal has been in strict lockdown since March 24th when the numbers of confirmed cases (with limited testing) were still very low but beginning to increase. We are hoping that this measure will "flatten the curve" and make a difference.

The two-day Palliative Care (PC) training programme which was planned for late March 2020 with two separate groups of Health workers from Lamjung District Hospital and government health posts using the newly translated Nepali toolkit had to be postponed at short notice.

Construction on the new PC building has been halted, and advertising for three more PC staff in March has also been delayed by the extended lockdown.

PC progress at GPH till mid-March

Our PC staff increased in February with the appointment of a counsellor, Gita, who is now increasing her hospital-based experience and supporting the pastoral care team.



The building had been progressing well and on time with an expected completion of construction by June and

fit out ready for a functional building by September 2020. COVID-19 has subsequently intervened, so the timeline will now be delayed.



PC Toolkit Translation Completed

The translation project (supported by UK partner 'Palliative Care Works') of the PC Toolkit has now been completed and the draft Nepali translation has been printed.

Even though the planned training for March has been postponed, copies of the Nepali toolkit have been given to health post workers who completed training using the English version back in June 2018. The planned evaluation to ensure the final edition is accurate with appropriate cultural adaptation can hopefully still be completed by 2021.

PC Training – Introductory Workshop

Palliative Care (PC) continues raising a voice through different activities. The Introductory Workshop highlights for clinical staff the importance of both understanding and providing holistic care making their service more accessible and effective.

Thirty passionate participants from different hospitals gathered on March 1st & 2nd at Green Pastures Hospital. It was again facilitated by Prof. Rajesh Gongal from Kathmandu, with Dr Helen Douglas and the GPH PC team. The workshop focused on clinical palliative care as well as communication skills.

Networking opportunities

It was encouraging to meet in Kathmandu with a visiting Two World Collaborative representative, share about our model and progress and discuss potential paediatric networking for our PC service. Together we hope to collaborate towards implementing the 2017 National PC Strategy

IAPCON conference, Guwahati, India: 13-16 February 2020

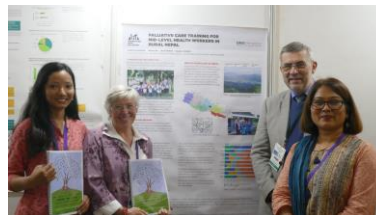
The Palliative Care team including Dr. Ruth (Green Pastures PC team leader), Manju (PC lead nurse), and Sunita (PC research officer) with Dr. Dan (PC consultant) and Dr Helen (Patan Hospital) attended the International Conference of the Indian Association of Palliative Care (IAPCON) 2020 in Guwahati, Assam. This is an inspiring time to hear about palliative care initiatives from India and around the world from multidisciplinary teams and institutions advocating and expanding palliative care services. It is a great opportunity for networking and to share our palliative care activities in an international platform.



We had the privilege of taking part in a pre-conference workshop focusing on PC in humanitarian crises and "palliative care is a basic human right". As a team we were invited to present our experiences of PC following the 2015 Nepal earthquake. Sr Manju reflects "It was fascinating to hear Border Special Force officers sharing how they provided support during floods, natural calamities and express their need for PC links and skills in these contexts". Resources flagged in this session became very timely as we have needed to consider PC implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.



In the main conference we were privileged to present our ongoing PC activities and research, including Dr Ruth on a case series from Nepal on the novel intervention of low-dose menthol application for neuropathic pain; and Sunita on the evaluation of our PC training for mid-level health workers in rural Nepal.



Sr Manju presented her clinical audit from Tansen Hospital, addressing spiritual and psychosocial issues of patients with advanced stage disease, which was completed as part of her Indian National Fellowship in Palliative Nursing, and was honoured with recognition of being the third best oral presentation (out of 50). Sunita reflects on hearing this news: " It was such an encouraging moment for all of us to work harder and move ahead to reach out to more people who are in need of PC". Well done Manju!



Dr Dan presented a paper on developing PC within primary care as a key aspect of delivering integrated chronic disease management as part of Universal Health Coverage particularly in low and middle income countries – a concept central to our PC model for Palliative Care development at GPH and rural districts of Nepal.

It was exciting to see young 11th grade students, nursing students as well medical students participating in this conference - particularly their excitement for advocacy and caring for needy people in their communities. One of the BSC nursing 1st year student said "I come from village where not many medical access and there are many with chronic disease therefore when I finish my study I would like to work in my own village caring such patient so I am really motivated from this conference "

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Prayer and Praise Points:

Give thanks for :

- Ongoing PC training opportunities over this time including the 2-day Introductory Workshop.
- Helpful meetings/ discussions in Lamjung preparing for the postponed March 2020 training
- New PC counsellor (Gita) joining and the enlarging PC team working well together at Green Pastures
- Printing of Draft Nepali Translation of the Palliative Care Toolkit and initial copies distributed to previous training participants

Please pray for :

- God's hand on our world as leaders respond to global pandemic, and particularly for the poor and vulnerable who are already suffering and will be most disadvantaged by the economic fallout
- Wisdom for our Green Pastures Hospital leadership team preparing for potential future crisis
- Wisdom as we review our current and future PC plans in light of the short- and long-term implications of COVID-19, with increased PC needs



Introductory workshop: participatory communication sessions and all the participants