

Dentistry and senior citizen

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BUSTER**

As a student under the curriculum of health education, to bring about our service is now more than treating the patient illness but improving the patient whole being. This is what being taught to us in the lectures under the subject community dentistry. Recently, I have the opportunity to apply this knowledge and get hands on knowledge what health, community and dentistry are all about. What other best method than to dive into the community itself. Under the supervision and guidance by Professor Dr Noorliza, my friends and I visited a house of old folks or senior citizen 20 minutes away from the college.

Such projects or activities like this are no longer a stranger to me as I did this frequently during my years of studying for my International Bachelorette diploma and for each project a similar report like this was also required. Therefore, the planning of our events would come as easily as I had experience such conduct before. However, this time around, the approach and set of mentality was more toward a dentist point of view and as a person who is to educate the community. The target group was senior citizen and the aim is to promote dental hygiene.

However, the targeted group consists of people who are already wear out by time. The gap between our generations is pretty wide and there are almost zero to none topic of interest to be discussed. Nevertheless, such barrier is to be overcome and I tried as hard as I can to keep the conversation going and even slip in advices regarding importance of maintaining and monitoring the oral health. There were other obstacles also, with the old age, their senses started to deteriorate.

The slurry speeches and their hearing also were not as well as they were in youth. What amazes me is how each person still put up a smile trying their best to enjoy our company. Though there were awkward silences now and then, we all manage to share couple of laughter here and there. I had the opportunity to talk to Mr Bulam who was a teacher and is already 80 years old. However, compare to the other inhabitant of the old folk home, he still maintain his intellect to a certain degree. His secret is reading and I am sure to apply throughout my life.

Most of our conversation involves me as the listener and it teaches me to be patient. However language or slang that people are conversing in, if we make an effort to listen, the meaning is sure to come across. Besides that, I also manage to interact with the caretaker. Looking at the condition of the residents and the house itself shows that these people did a really good job in taking care of them. Even more so, it amazes me as most of them do it from the goodwill of their heart. To be expose to this humble people really make me more grounded.

This kind of humanity experience is not the kind of thing that can be taught, it has to be experienced by oneself. To bring joy to their daily mundane life, waiting for time to pass by, we perform some songs. Looking how their face light up like a kid in a clown show, gives my heart a wrench and I somehow realize that they must have been really lonely to be away from their family, friends and home. Therefore, I was glad that our little visit breaks their daily routine and provided them with the company they longed.

We even presented each of them with a Chinese New Year card and oranges. I hope that this little souvenir reminded them of us and shows the effort we put in to accompany them. The time given was short and at the end of the visit I still wonder whether I had done the duty required by me as a dental student or better yet just as another compassionhuman being. The trip has opened my eyes to the various communities present and how each of them requires equal amount of attention by health practitioners.

I believethat I still need to improve mycommunicationskill and adopt a more compassionate approach to the people around me. Last but not least, I was really glad that the trip was done with my friends as it teaches me to also learn how to cooperate with each other and work together. I long discovered that certain things are not meant to be done alone and this trip reinforces its importance. Finally, in the near future I hope to achieve greater success and becomes wiser over the accumulated experiences especially this one.