

Creating Advance Care Planning Awareness in An Acute Hospital in Singapore

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Introduction

Advance care planning (ACP) is a voluntary communication process between an individual, his or her loved ones, and health providers about his or her future care preferences. ACP is heralded as an essential component in promoting respect for patient self-determination, right-siting of treatment and care services and improving end of life care within the healthcare setting. As part of its vision to provide holistic patient care, Singapore General Hospital (SGH) implemented a hospital-wide ACP initiative in September 2013. This practice paper will present the key strategies employed by the hospital to:

- (1) increase ACP awareness among healthcare providers
- (2) engage stakeholders' interest and involvement
- (3) increase the overall ACP referrals from clinicians

Methodology

A multi-pronged communication and engagement strategy was used over three years to extend the reach of ACP to the 10,000 strong workforces in SGH. Endorsement from the hospital senior management, the medical board, and nursing council provided the ACP team with the bandwidth to organise engagement roadshows and implement training programmes for hospital staff. Collaboration with the hospital's communication department aided the design and production of quality education materials for staff and the successful launch of multiple hospital-wide engagement events.

Result

Till date, our ACP team has outreached to more than 5,000 hospital workers within the SGH campus. We have organised 75 ACP awareness roadshows, 35 advocacy training workshops, a campus-wide town hall meeting in 2014 and an inaugural ACP symposium in 2015 that was attended by more than 400 regional healthcare providers. **Table 1** highlights the list of ACP-related publications and outreach events over the course of three years. **Table 2** shows the extent of reach of our engagement efforts.

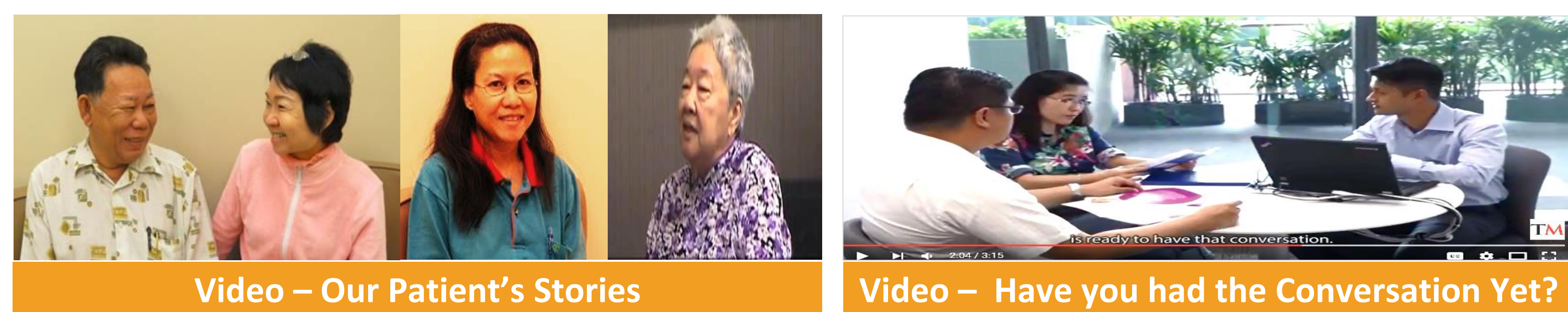
Table 1

Publications & Outreach Events	Completed in
Interview – “Communicating Hope” in Singapore Health (July/August) Issue	July 2014
Campus-wide Grapevine Session	October 2014
Production ACP Video – Our Patient’s Stories	October 2014
Launch of ACP microsite on the hospital intranet	October 2014
Opinion piece – “If I don’t wake up...” in Singapore Health (November/December) Issue	November 2014
Launch of SingHealth ACP Video on Wellness TV	May 2015
SingHealth Symposium on ACP 2015	May 2015
ACP Online Forum on HealthXchange	August 2015
SGH Arts Expression Wall Exhibit: A collaboration with NUS Medical Student Group - Project Happy Apple	January 2016



SingHealth Grapevine Session - 9th Oct 2014

More than 120 healthcare providers gathered to hear from the Chairman of SGH Chief Medical Board share about his vision of ACP as part of patient care. A panel discussion by four clinicians highlighted the benefits of ACP for patients and also for healthcare providers to right-site care.



Videos featuring local patient were produced to communicate the relevance and benefits of ACP for Singaporeans. These videos were frequently shown during road shows, training workshops and even at the hospital outpatient patient waiting area.

Table 2

Outcome of Outreach & Training Workshops	Results
No. of ACP Awareness road shows	75
No. of hospital staff who attended the awareness talks	4975
No. of ACP facilitator workshop conducted	18
No. of certified ACP facilitators	136
No. of ACP advocate workshops conducted	35
No. of trained ACP advocates	870

April 2013 – March 2014	April 2014 – March 2015	April 2015 – March 2016	Total
43	255	680	978

With targeted outreach efforts over the last three years, the number of hospital-wide ACP referrals has also increased from 43 to 680.

Conclusion

A sustainable ACP programme hinges on the development of an organised system and endorsement from institutional leadership. One of the main trusts of the hospital's implementation strategy was establishing a collaborative partnership with its communication department to develop and deliver consistent, comprehensible, and targeted messages about the importance of ACP for our patients and family caregivers. Furthermore, our partnership with the National Heart Centre Singapore (NHCS) ACP team facilitated sharing of resources and synchronized the outreach efforts within SGH campus.