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'The Future is Now: Aspire, Achieve, Advance'



Cardiac-Transplant Nurses' Perceptions on Patients' Psychological Journey

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Biography:

Miss Stephanie Cheng was a graduate from the University of Sydney in 2013 with Master of Nursing and Bachelor of Arts degrees. She then joined the St. Vincent's Hospital, Sydney as a registered nurse and has then been working at the Cardiology, Coronary Care, Heart Failure and Cardiac Transplantation Unit. She has developed a profound interest in heart failure, mechanical circulatory support and cardiac-transplant care. Last year, she has further gained a postgraduate degree in cardiovascular nursing from the University of Tasmania. To further enhance her nursing care for cardiac-transplant patients, she lately, with the grant of a scholarship from the St. Vincent's Curran Foundation and Jarry Fund, undertakes a postgraduate cardiothoracic and heart lung transplant course organised by the St. Vincent's hospital, Sydney, which gives her an opportunity for rotations to other patient cares like cardiothoracic intensive care unit, cardiac catheterisation laboratory and the heart and lung outpatient clinic.

The topic of interest is cardiac-transplant nurses' perceptions on patients' psychological journey throughout the heart transplantation process. From being diagnosed with the need of heart transplant; to recovering after surgery; to adapting life with post-transplant complications, how much do nurses understand the psychological journey their patients go through?

Heart transplant recipients are just as likely to face the challenges in psychological health as they do in physical health. Current practice has focused on multidisciplinary-team approach from peri-transplant screenings and educations to preparing patients for the life after transplantation. However, post-transplant psychological disorders and distresses still frequently occur with associated risks of morbidity and mortality. Among the multidisciplinary teams, patients spend most of their time with nurses. Yet, limited studies have been conducted in investigating nurses' ability in understanding cardiac-transplant patients' psychological journey and the likely impacts.

Nurses are essentially patients' advocate and medium among the healthcare teams, their perceptions are critical through their midst of struggles of the dilemma in providing palliative management while maintaining faith in new hearts can improve their patients' quality of life. Their perspectives will help in shaping the extent of the nursing management for the potential and post-transplanted cardiac transplant

patients. It is hoped that if nurses are equipped with greater awareness on the patients' transplant psychological journey, more efficient and effective interventions can be developed to maximise cardiac transplantation outcomes.