

Prof. Clifford Hughes: patient safety and clinical quality deserve more attention

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Editor's note

The 2017 International Green Healthcare Forum was successfully held on 29 October at the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital. An army of the world-renowned experts was invited to high-quality academic exchange platform where the experts co-studied the hot topics, like the prospect of healthcare sector in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, three fames project and healthcare talent training, international quality management and the green healthcare reform and the future. At this forum, we had the great honor to invite Professor Clifford Hughes, International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISqua), to have an exclusive interview with us (*Figure 1*).

“When I was a very young doctor, I saw first by-pass operation in my hospital...” Professor Hughes recalled the moment when he set foot on the path of cardiothoracic surgery, *“I suddenly realized it was just a simple operation enabled by high technology. However, it relieved the patients’ symptoms immediately. He could go back to work within six weeks. It seems a very sensible career to follow.”*

Speaking of patient safety and clinical quality, Professor Hughes indicated that patient safety and clinical quality are two different concepts. The first one is something doctors and nurses pay attention to. They don't like people to pass away or to have complications. The second one is what patients focus on; Quality. They don't like getting infections, poor food or being alone in hospital. So, we need to bring them both concepts together to promote the quality of healthcare.

Prof. Hughes said, *“I think there are some challenges in promoting the quality of healthcare. Sometimes the nurses and doctors are so busy and too tired. They may not have the resources to get the work done.”*

Professor Hughes is a professor and also involved in editorial boards and many associations. *“Sometimes it is difficult to get the right balance. Particularly as I have another duty. That is the duty to my family. I have three married children and ten grandchildren. I know how to use time wisely. I think*



Figure 1 Professor Clifford Hughes and Mike Cheung, Science Editor, AME Publishing Company.

I should say no more than I do. I try to keep concentrating on one thing at a time. Sometimes I get tired or I have questions, I would talk to my family.” It shows the family support is a key to success for Prof. Hughes.

As a mentor, Professor Hughes is involved in many Person Based Care, Quality Improvement programs and the development of clinical leaders. He has his own opinion on being a good clinical leader. *“They need to be good a good nurse or a good doctor, they also need to be a good listener, so that they hear the voices from their team. They need to realize the team is more vital than they themselves, as a clinical leader. There are four things they need to have: profound knowledge, profound strategy, a purposeful direction and the purposeful behaviors.”*

As Professor Hughes has led many medical team and attended many conferences in China, we are curious about his views on the medical development in China. *“It is dramatically different from the first time when I came to China in 1985. Heart bypass surgery was then rarely performed. However, nowadays, China is developing technologies making extraordinary changes in the medical*



Figure 2 Prof. Clifford Hughes: patient safety and clinical quality deserve more attention (1).

Available online: <http://asvidett.amegroups.com/article/view/22350>



Figure 3 Professor Clifford Hughes.

field. This city of Shenzhen is a demonstration of the enormous progression of China.”

For more details, please watch the video below (Figure 2).

Interview questions

- (I) We all know that you are a successful cardiothoracic surgeon. What makes you interested in cardiothoracic surgery?
- (II) How do you see the prospect of patient safety and clinical quality?
- (III) Are there any difficulties in promoting the concept of quality in health care?
- (IV) You are very active in teaching and you are also involved in many editorial boards and other associations. How do you strike a balance among them?
- (V) You have contributed a lot to patient based care,

quality improvement programmes or even the development of clinical leaders. So, what are the criteria for being a good clinical leader?

- (VI) We know that you have attended conferences and led the medical teams to China, how do you see the medical development of China nowadays?

Expert's introduction

Professor Cliff Hughes (Figure 3) is the President of the International Society for Quality in Health Care. He is Professor of Patient Safety and Clinical Quality at Macquarie University. Formerly a cardiothoracic surgery he was the Chief Executive of the Clinical Excellence Commission, in NSW, Australia.

He has served on numerous state and federal committees associated with quality, safety and research in clinical practice for health care services. A fellow, Senior Examiner, Cardiothoracic Surgery and Councillor of the Royal Australian College of Surgeons, he was awarded its highest honour, the Sir Hugh Devine Medal, in October 2015.

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Footnote

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