

Setting Up the Multidisciplinary Cleft Care Team in Southern Thailand

Introduction

In 1976, Professor Dilok Premasthoen M.D. started his cleft lip/palate repair in Songkla General Hospital, HatYai Central Hospital and Songklanagarind University Hospital. I worked with him since 1981. We offered the surgical correction for the cleft patients and followed up in a short period of time. Our patients were mostly age over 2 years even in teenagers or an adult patients, Sometime we had to do the palatoplasty first then we performed the cheiloplasty in the next visit. We advised the patient's families to give the speech training after cleft palate repair to their children by themselves. We advised them to note the difficult sound of the alphabets and words, then repeated practicing.

Cleft lip/palate and Craniofacial Anomalies Center Prince of Songkla University

I had the opportunity to visit Canniesburn Hospital, Bearsden, Glass Glow, Scotland in 1985, UCLA, Professor Henry Kawamoto Jr. in 1990, Southfield, Michigan, Professor Ian Jackson and John Hopkin's Hospital. Professor Paul Manson in 1996. After that I tried to set up the Cleft clinic to treat the Cleft lip/palate patients by the multidisciplinary team and used the patients as a center. It's still doubtful or not understanding about the creating multidisciplinary team and working together in developing countries. The people, even the educated one, cannot work as a team well. Everyone wanted to show how the leader they were. Probably they do not know how to be a good followers, working together and use their experience for the team. In Thailand, most of the physicians, surgeons and paramedic personels work full time in the government hospital. They have no time left for the teamwork jobs such as the Cleft Clinic.

In the first time when I tried to set up the Cleft Clinic, I started up by asking everyone from the interdepartments to join the Cleft Clinic. They were agree, but they wanted the Cleft Clinic send the patients to their offices, because they had no time left to share. The second time I started the pilot project for the Cleft Clinic with the Orthodontist, and Speech therapist. We continue opened the Cleft Clinic for 1 year. Then we had to close the clinic due to the unplanned schedule which was interrupted by the pension of the public holidays. The Cleft Lip/Palate and Craniofacial Anomalies Center, Prince of Songkla University was approved on 28 September, 2001. This time I selected the team members who accepted the team concept and willing to work together as a multidisciplinary team and used the patient as a center. We studies the SWOT analysis, we tried to correct our pit falls from the past.

We received the academic knowledge support in creating multidisciplinary team and interdisciplinary treatment for the cleft patients from the staffs of Khon-Kaen Cleft Center. We had the 1st PSU-KKU Cleft Center Conference in HatYai on 13 September, 2001

The Cleft Clinic was commenced on 8 October, 2001. We had received The Smile Train treatment grant for the poor children in January 2002.