

Kuanshan

Oral Cancer Screening to Protect Inmates' Health

September 03, 2013

This year Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital started treating patients in the drug addiction treatment clinic which used to be undertaken by the Correction Department of Ministry of Justice in Taitung County. In order to improve the quality of medical care, Tzu Chi Hospital provided Oral checkups to 157 inmates in August in addition to providing specialized medical

services. In the morning of September 3, Dr. Chuan-Hong Sun, an otolaryngologist of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital, was invited to the clinic to treat and diagnose 17 inmates who failed the screening test last time. Many jail staff also took part in this screening test.

Although Dr. Chuan-Hong Sun had prescheduled appointment in Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital in the afternoon, he took an early train to Kuanshan in support of this medical outreach. He and his staff arrived at Taitung drug addiction treatment clinic at 8:30 a.m.

However, the screening process did not go smoothly. First, the data on



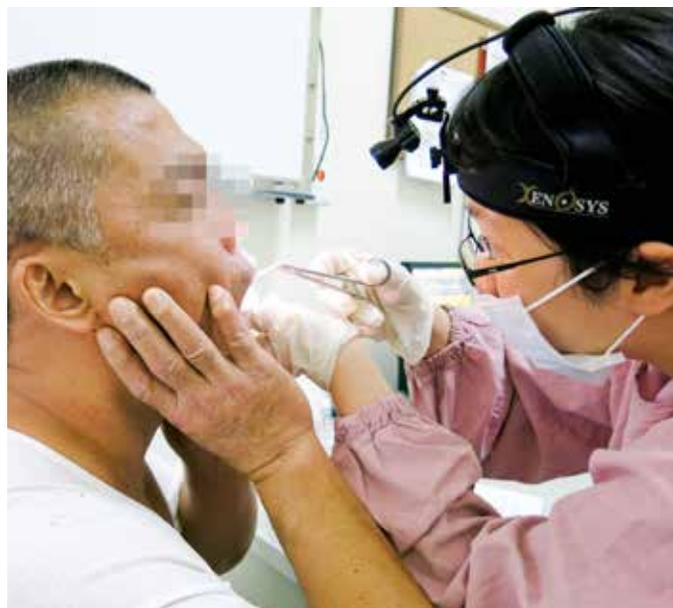
Deputy Director Kun-Feng Huang (left) of Administrative Affairs Office in Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital assisted a patient at Taitung drug addiction treatment clinic to fill out the checklist.

the health insurance cards could not be deciphered by the computer. Due to jail shift schedule, jail staff postponed their appointments. Only three employees had completed oral screening by 9:30 a.m. Everyone acted like a cat on a hot tin roof. Luckily, the operation was able to return to normalcy with the assistance of information technology personnel.

Among the 17 inmates with positive reaction, Dr. Sun concluded that fortunately, most of them only suffered from homogeneity thin white spot lesions. Five prisoners were required to undergo pathological tissue biopsy tests; one inmate was suspect of oral cancer. Dr. Sun immediately referred him for treatment at a large-scale hospital.

Director Wen-Kon Jian of Taitung drug addiction treatment clinic and 13 supervisors of the rehab center received oral checkups and three of them were diagnosed as having thin white spot lesions on the surface. Many supervisors admitted they frequently smoke and drink. Dr. Sun repeatedly reminded them not to smoke, chew betel nuts and minimized any oral stimulation for one or two months to see improvement. After all, patients are assured of disease free as long as they are examined every six months with an otolaryngologist or dentist.

Tobacco, alcohol and betel nuts are the main culprits that cause oral lesions. Not only are the inmates at high risk, in



Dr. Chuan-Hong Sun conducted pathological biopsy for patients. He provided appropriate medical treatment based on the results.

fact, many residents on the east coast enjoy chewing betel nuts just like we chew bubble gum; tobacco and alcohol become their families, an integral part of their lives. As a result, Kuanshan Tzu Chi Hospital is proactively promoting a free-of-betel-nuts community and offering outpatients' smoking cessation treatment, in addition to holding health education regularly in the community. Recently, a project to raise the awareness of cancer was undertaken in year 2013, offering oral, colon and Pap smear tests. So far, 242 residents have completed the oral cancer screenings.