

# Much more than a place to store dead bodies – The role of a hospital mortuary for experiential learning on “Good Death” in medical education

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- **Medical Humanities in the MBBS curriculum**
- To help nurture the development of medical students into caring physicians who are capable of a deeper understanding of the human condition and who are thus able to provide better care to patients and to themselves



# What issue was addressed?

- It is the general impression that the mortuary is a place for the death, and functions as an area solely for temporary storage of dead bodies

# What was tried?

## (Compulsory) Mortuary Visit in MBBS Year 3 Medical Humanities Programme (2014-18)

- 30-min guided tour to various areas (e.g. waiting area, autopsy room, body storage area, funeral room)
- 30-min clinician sharing real-life stories where the mortuary contribute to humanistic care for the deceased and the bereaved families
- Assessment: Written reflection on this first encounter with mortuary in the medical school

# What was tried?

<b>Key Teachers</b>	<b>Dr Gavin S.W. Chan (Queen Mary Hospital)</b> <b>Mr Gary K.F. Tsang (Queen Mary Hospital)</b> <b>Mr Jackie C.K. Poon (Queen Mary Hospital)</b>
<b>Theme</b>	Death, Dying and Bereavement
<b>Learning outcomes</b>	By the end of the session, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Describe the role of mortuary in healthcare system</li><li>▪ Explain how the mortuary is not only a place for the death, but also has life-affirming values in the hospital and society</li><li>▪ Reflect on the dying process, a normal part of life, which would prepare them to better care for patients</li></ul>
<b>Learning activities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Lecture with reflections on death, introduction to the set-up of mortuary and their respective functional roles</li><li>▪ Visits to mortuary in small groups, with navigation of various areas (waiting area, autopsy room, body storage area, funeral room) to appreciate their values in healthcare system and society</li></ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	Each student to produce a short reflection on how the learning experience impacted their understanding of care of the dying, the deceased and their loved ones

# Student Feedback in 2017-18

n=81	I achieved the stated learning outcomes of the session	Overall, the session was effective	This session was relevant to my development as a doctor
Agree	74.07% (n=60)	76.54% (n=62)	77.78% (n=63)
Somewhat Agree	25.93% (n=21)	23.46% (n=19)	20.99% (n=17)
Somewhat Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	1.23% (n=1)
Disagree	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

# Student Feedback in 2017-18

## What did you enjoy most/ find most useful about this workshop?

- *“Understanding of greater meaning of a mortuary”*
- *“I think this is good in a way medical students can really get the setting and the atmosphere of the mortuary. This is very important in nurturing the sympathy of the students”*
- *“The sharing of personal experience of how to make patients' family feel comfortable”*
- *“Knowing some stories that happened in the mortuary made me change my perception and understanding of mortuary”*
- **Can you make one suggestion to help us improve the activity?**
- *“Sharing sessions following mortuary visit may aid us students in unpacking our feelings following such shocking, or even horrifying, scenes”*
- *“Allow us to have more conversations with mortuary staff ”*



Thank you!

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What is MBBS Medical Humanities Programme at HKU?



Any thoughts, comments, feedback, ideas on this conference presentation, most welcome to contact me at:

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