

Editorial

Although it is just a few months from the publication of our last issue of newsletter, I am sure many of our colleagues have experienced a journey that seemed to have lasted much, much longer. Hong Kong has been severely hit by the SARS epidemic with its peak in March/April and it was contained, thanks to all parties who have contributed, and 'leave' us slowly in the following months. No one knows whether it will knock our door again.

The event hit the Hong Kong people and disturbed our lives in many respects. It is not only a medical problem. It deeply affected the Society and certainly stirred up people's psychological energy. Fear, uncertainty, isolation, loss, death just to name a few.

The principle in management of SARS contradicts with the philosophy in palliative care. Touch, treasuring relationship with loved ones, so important in the last days of one's life, have to be replaced by separation, isolation and physical barriers. There is no surprise that palliative care workers have to struggle in positioning themselves in the correct perspective, which may not be possible at all times.

Therefore, it is very timely that we have a few articles from our colleagues who gave their reflection of their journeys in this difficult time. We would also like to send our condolence to our colleagues who have given up their lives in combating SARS.

The Society is in recovery phase. The medical services are getting 'normalized'. So is our newsletter. The article on advanced head and neck cancer is to be completed in this issue. Regular meetings are resumed and we have the presentations of our palliative medicine doctors' meeting notes.

Our editorial board 'grows' despite the adverse external environment. We welcome Dr Doris Tse to join us and she has much contribution in this newsletter.

Dr. Lau Kam Shing,
Chief Editor