

## CHINESE CONTINENCE AUDIOTAPE PROJECT

### Hypothesis / aims of study

Incontinence is an embarrassing health issue. Many sufferers keep the problem to themselves for fear of rejection. As it is not life threatening, they tend not to seek help. This condition is exacerbated among people who have poor communication skills because of the language barrier.

In Australia, many elderly Chinese, especially women, have poor formal education and are illiterate even in their own language. To overcome this problem, an audiotope in Cantonese was produced in 2003 for continence promotion and education in Non English Speaking Background (NESB) Chinese Communities.

### Study design, materials and methods

Titled 'Health Talk on Incontinence', this 35 minutes tape was based on the author's personal experience over 5 years as a Cantonese speaking Nurse Continence Advisor. Information was compiled from 8 Continence Foundation of Australia (CFA) factsheets (Chinese edition): (1) What Is Incontinence (2) Good Bladder Habits for Everyone (3) Bladder Training (4) Pelvic Floor Exercises for Men (5) Pelvic Floor Exercises for Women (6) Bladder Problems and the Prostate (7) Constipation and Urinary Incontinence (8) Faecal Incontinence. National Continence Help line and Telephone Interpreter Service contact details were also included to encourage help seeking.

The material was first written in English and sent to the CFA for confirmation of the validity of the information by their senior Nurse Continence Advisors. The tape was then recorded by an accredited Cantonese interpreter at the Audio-Visual Unit of the hospital. The master tape was 'road-tested' by two continence sufferers who found the information valuable and easy to understand. By following the conservative treatment recommended, they noticed the improvement in symptoms. A total of 250 tapes were produced. Over 95% were distributed to CFA head office and branches, Chinese communities, health professionals, Chinese community radio stations in Sydney as well as Cantonese speaking outpatients at a Sydney tertiary hospital.

Project evaluation was undertaken at 12 months via:

- (1) Survey of health professionals and Chinese communities
- (2) Comparison study of the audiotope and written material in an elderly group
- (3) Feedback from outpatients at a Chinese Continence Clinic

### Results

#### *Survey of Health Professionals and Chinese Communities*

Over 300 people listened to tape in first 12 months, with 90% of them aged over 75 years. Most found the information useful, except 3 elderly who thought the tape was monotonous. Some sought help as a result, however, we did not know exactly how many. Requests were made to have the tape recorded in Mandarin.

#### *Comparison Study of Audiotope and Written Material in an Elderly Group*

Prior to attending an educational session on incontinence, a group of elderly Chinese people who had been referred to the program by a Migrant Worker, were given the audiotope and the paper copy of the tape material. After 4 weeks, a 10- point questionnaire written in Chinese was administered. Seventeen participants who received both material were studied, 3 men and 14 women. The median age was 73 years (range 60 – 92). The median education was primary school level (ranging from no education to tertiary level). When asked which material was easier to understand, 9 (53%) rated the audiotope over the paper copy but none rated otherwise, and 7 (41%) rated both material equally. There was one drop out because of a faulty tape player. Six people reported having incontinence, 5 had urinary incontinence and 1 had faecal incontinence. The median duration was 2 years (ranging from 0.5 -3 years). However, no one was ever treated. The participants commented that listening to the tape or reading the information prior to the education session enhanced understanding and encouraged them to think of any questions in advance. Our contact details were given to encourage sufferers to seek help

#### *Feedback from Chinese Continence Clinic,*

Over 20 patients were loaned the tape at the first consultation and asked to make a copy for reference. They found the information helpful and enhanced understanding of their incontinence problem and the conservative treatments involved

### Interpretation of results

More people preferred the audiotope than written material. It was a new and novel approach to continence promotion. It allowed the participant to listen at home where he or she was more receptive. The tape could be repeated many times when the listener was doing other activities. The comparison study in the elderly group demonstrated the reluctance for the suffers to seek help because of the stigma associated with incontinence, the condition is not life threatening and lack of understanding due to poor communication and education. The remark from the elderly who thought the tape was monotonous could be due to the tape being recorded by a single person. A change of format, such as having two people in dialogue could be a better alternative.

Concluding message

The continence audiotape is an effective promotion / education tool to raise awareness in the NESB Chinese communities, especially the many elderly who had poor literacy skill or impaired vision. It encourages the sufferer to seek help. As a consequence of the positive feedback and at the request of the Chinese communities, our sponsor has again funded the production of a Mandarin continence audiotape, to benefit those NESB Chinese from China, Taiwan and South East Asia.

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**DISCLOSURES:** NONE

**HUMAN SUBJECTS:** This study did not need ethical approval because no ethical approval was needed but followed the Declaration of Helsinki Informed consent was obtained from the patients.