

To: Assignment Editors, Managing Editors and Reporters
(For Immediate Release)

**Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation
Symposium on Breast Health Education 2024
Latest Breast Cancer Diagnosis and Treatment, Integrating Traditional
Chinese Medicine and Mind-Body-Spirit Healing**

(Hong Kong, 18 May 2024) Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in Hong Kong, and the third leading cause of cancer-related deaths; affecting numerous families. According to data from the Department of Health in 2021, there were 6,400 newly diagnosed cases of breast cancer in women, representing a 13% increase compared to the previous year, and in 2022 a total of 792 women died from breast cancer. In order to raise public awareness of breast cancer and disseminate breast health knowledge to breast cancer patients and the public, the **Hong Kong Breast Cancer Foundation (HKBCF)** successfully held the "**Symposium on Breast Health Education 2024**" today. This year's Symposium was held at Dorsett Wanchai Hong Kong and broadcasted live on Facebook and YouTube of the HKBCF.

Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine Services is the direction of healthcare service development in Hong Kong. A total of eight medical experts in various specialities were invited to speak at this year's Symposium sharing their knowledge and insight in the **latest breast cancer diagnosis and treatment, integrating Traditional Chinese Medicine and Mind-Body-Spirit Healing**. They were Dr. Yvonne TSANG, member of the Advisory Council, HKBCF; Dr. HUNG Wai Ka, member of the Management Committee, HKBCF; Dr KWAN Wing Hong, member of Hong Kong Breast Cancer Registry Steering Committee (HKBRSC); Dr. Carol KWOK, member of HKBCRSC; Dr. Peter TEO, Specialist in Clinical Oncology; Dr. Joanne CHIU, member of HKBCRSC; Ms. Kelly CHAN, Head of HKBCF Breast Cancer Support Centre; and Dr. David AU, Registered Chinese Medicine Practitioner and Professional Consultant, School of Chinese Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. A breast cancer survivor had also shared how the Chinese Medicine treatment and the breast cancer support services offered by the HKBCF had helped her on the journey to recovery.

Dr. Eliza FOK, Chairman of the HKBCF, expressed in her welcome speech that breast cancer is the number one cancer facing and the third leading course of cancer deaths among women in Hong Kong. The HKBCF is dedicated to mitigating breast cancer risk by providing comprehensive breast cancer care through public education about the importance of breast health, supporting breast cancer patients, survivors, family members and caregivers, as well as research and advocacy. The HKBCF has designated the month of May as "Breast Cancer Survivorship Month" to let all breast cancer patients and survivors know that we would always stand by and support them. Dr. Fok said,

“Let’s join hands with the HKBCF to ignite the candle of hope for breast cancer patients and survivors as well as their families and caregivers to build a better and healthier Hong Kong.”

Dr. Polly CHEUNG, Founder of the HKBCF, stated that Hong Kong currently has one of the highest breast cancer incidence rates in Asia, and it has been steadily increasing over the past few decades. In order to save more lives, the diagnosis and treatment strategies for breast cancer have been continuously evolving. The integration of Chinese and Western medicine in cancer treatment plans has been adopted by medical institutions in Hong Kong to provide more comprehensive and personalised cancer treatment. This Symposium has provided up-to-date information on breast cancer diagnoses and treatment technologies to help breast cancer patients deal with the challenges during their journey to recovery as well as raise awareness among the public.

Dr. Yvonne TSANG reminded that although the age of onset for breast cancer is generally over 40 years old, the threat to young women should not be overlooked. However, currently, the majority of breast cancer cases in Hong Kong are self-detected rather than detected through screening. Due to the unsatisfactory habit of regular screening, patients would usually undergo breast screening when they discovered lumps in their breasts or experience nipple bleeding. If unfortunately diagnosed with breast cancer, it is likely to be in a higher cancer stage. For Asian women, especially those with dense breast tissue, mammography is usually combined with breast ultrasound to improve detection accuracy.

Dr. HUNG Wai Ka mentioned that treatment plan for breast cancer is determined by patient’s cancer stage and subtype. In certain situations, PET scan would be used to determine the extent of disease. Breast cancer can generally be classified into three subtypes: luminal, HER2-positive, and triple negative breast cancer (TNBC). According to different severity and biological characteristics, treatment modalities and strategies would be varied, such as the use of neoadjuvant treatment.

Dr. KWAN Wing Hong pointed out that radiation therapy plays an indispensable role in breast cancer treatment. Currently, photon therapy is the mainstream radiation therapy in Hong Kong, but it may damage normal tissues during the treatment process. Proton therapy, which has the advantages of high precision and fewer side effects, is gradually being introduced in medical institutions in Hong Kong, reducing the impact on surrounding organs. However, the average cost of proton therapy is double that of traditional radiation therapy. It is hoped

that as the technology matures and becomes widely used, the cost can be reduced to a level affordable for the general public.

Dr. Carol KWOK discussed new treatment options for hormone receptor-positive/HER2-negative (HR+/HER2-) breast cancer which significantly improve patients' prognosis. For example, extending the use of hormone therapy could reduce the risk of recurrence. In metastatic setting, oral targeted therapy CDK4/6 inhibitors combined with hormone therapy would effectively prolong progression-free survival.

Dr. Peter TEO stated that currently, approximately 10% of breast cancer cases in Hong Kong are triple-negative breast cancer, which is more common in young women and associated with genetic factors (BRCA1). It is characterized by rapid growth, higher likelihood of metastasis to other organs, higher risk of recurrence, and less response to conventional breast cancer treatments such as hormone therapy or targeted therapy. Triple-negative breast cancer is considered a more aggressive subtype. Immunotherapy combined with chemotherapy as neoadjuvant treatment can improve treatment effectiveness.

Dr. Joanne CHIU indicated that many patients are afraid of having to undergo mastectomy for breast cancer treatment. However, HER2-positive breast cancer responds well to neoadjuvant targeted therapy. Anti-HER2 targeted therapy combined with chemotherapy can effectively shrink the tumor size, allowing for surgical removal and preserving a portion of the breast. This greatly improves the psychological well-being and quality of life for patients. However, the decision whether to perform a full mastectomy or preserve part of the breast tissue depends on multiple factors, including tumor size, location, lymph node involvement, and other considerations. Recently, the invention of antibody-drug conjugate (ADC) also expands the treatment options for patients with advanced disease.

Dr. David AU had a dialogue with **breast cancer patient**, sharing the holistic approach of Traditional Chinese Medicine in addressing the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of their well-being. Methods such as massage, qigong, and dietary adjustments were discussed as means to alleviate symptoms such as breast pain and swelling, boost immunity, improve quality of life, and promote overall balance and recovery. These approaches can help patients cope with treatment side effects, reduce stress and anxiety, and enhance their psychological and emotional well-being.

For a summary of the speakers' content, please click [<https://bit.ly/44PdqVq>].

To review the Symposium, please click [<https://bit.ly/4dEtX2N>].

Download photos: [<https://bit.ly/3UPz5bJ>]

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