

The Therapeutic Touch of Hualien Physical Therapists Consoled the Earthquake Victims and Rescue Teams

Special report by Taiwan Physical Therapy Association

Taiwan Physical Therapy Association (TPTA) and its members would like to express our gratitude toward the concerns and condolence arrived from the world for the powerful earthquake hit the coastal city Hualien on February 6, 2018. Many buildings in Hualien were severely damaged or partially collapsed, with 17 people were reported dead and nearly 300 injured (till February 11). It was devastated for many Taiwanese, as the whole country is preparing for the Lunar New Year celebration from February 15 onward.

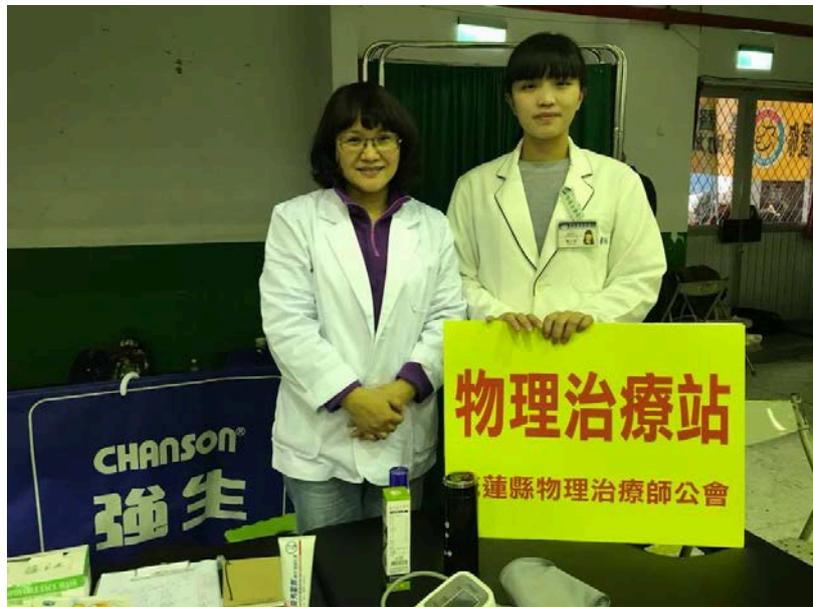
Since the earthquake, TPTA has received many messages of condolences and offers of help come from organizations such as WCPT, Japanese Physical Therapy Association Macau Physical Therapy Association, Philippine Physical Therapy Association, and many others. At the same time, the Society of Hualien County Physical Therapists organised 20 PTs to provide a walk-in physical therapy service at the temporary shelters right away on the next day of the earthquake struck; they worked in shifts to provide immediate care for those shocked residents directed to the shelters. Most of the complaints were musculoskeletal symptoms causing by stress and anxiety, or acute sprain and strain.

On February 9, the PT service station was relocated to the rescue operation site to provide on-site support and care for members of the rescue teams including those volunteers and other medics. The major needs in this service site were muscle pain and strains (neck, shoulders and lower back) and joint sprains (wrists/ankles) due to overuse in the rescue mission. More than 80 people were treated in this PT service operation. This also proves that PT can still be proactive in this circumstance.

Special thanks go to Emma Stokes, Margot Skinner, Jonathon Kruger, John Xerri de Caro, Gillian Webb, and Tracy Bury from WCPT and WCPT-AWP; Kazuto Handa, Masahito Kimura, and Naoko Orito from JPTA; Steven Chan and Ao Kit Man from MPTA, and Michael Gabilo from PPTA – as your truest friend and reliable partner, TPTA would like to take this chance of Dog Year to wish you all ‘prosperous wealth’ in 2018, and thank you for your support for the people in Hualien and also all of us in Taiwan.



Looking out from the PT Service Station at the Rescue Base.



PTs at one of the shelter, based at a sport stadium.



PT checked the condition of the arm of one of the victims of the earthquake.



PT provided treatment for lower back pain for a military personnel of the rescue team.



PT stretched the sore back muscles for a rescue team member.

(Photos provided by the Society of Hualien County Physical Therapists)