

## SS International Forum

### **An Eye-Unit Working Model: Medical Social Work Focuses on Retinopathy of Prematurity**

#### **Ms. Grace Mishler**

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Humanities – Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



**Date** : 28 November 2018 (Wednesday)  
**Time** : 4:00 – 5:30 pm  
**Venue** : Room Y7302, SS Multi-function Room  
Yeung Kin Man Academic Building, City University of Hong Kong  
**Commentator** : Mr. CHONG Chan Yau, President of HK Blind Union  
**Moderator** : Mr. MAK Hoi Wah, YSNet Fellow, SS  
**Language** : English

#### ***Abstract***

Premature babies with Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) (早產兒視網膜病變) are rising as a global concern in developed as well as developing countries. ROP is generally an avoidable blindness with early intervention, but ROP has emerged as a major cause of infant blindness. Lack of equipment, lack of skilled ROP Surgeon, lack of provision of family support were identified as the major challenges. In Vietnam, ROP Viet Nam (ROPVN) Social Work Team and the Eye Unit of Children Hospital started a project in September 2017 to improve the quality of ROP eye care within the context of doctors' high volume of patients and time constraint. Medical Social Workers implemented case management of infants identified at-risk of blindness. Over 1,300 intakes of ROP babies were attained thus far. Weekly parent support groups provided knowledge and information about ROP and strategies in management of infants' medical profile, course of treatment, and follow-up. Weekly meetings with doctors and social workers created new spaces for development. Social media advocates created space on TV to educate the public about ROP. Social investors have prevented 30 ROP infants from going blind and purchased critical eye equipment. Project initiatives in capacity building of doctors and case managers in local provinces proved essential in the success.

#### ***Biosketch***

**Ms. Grace Mishler** (MSW, U of Illinois-Urbana) is an International Social Work Program Volunteer with the National Vietnam USSH – Ho Chi Minh City. Being low vision herself, Grace has lectured and campaigned to promote social awareness of people with disabilities (PwD) among university students and the community. She has been working with the PwD community for the past 18 years in Vietnam and has applied social work interventions with the blind community. She has developed courses and adopted teaching manuals for local use. More recently, her social work research and practice are focusing on service gaps in higher education and public health care system. The rapid increase of infant blindness caused by Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP) has drawn her attention and effort to form Parents' Self-help groups to monitor the treatment process and to promote case management of ROP. Grace is a member of ROPVN Social Work Team as a Senior Advisor.

**Interested staff, students and participants, please make reservation via email  
([paulie.chan@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:paulie.chan@cityu.edu.hk)) before 26 Nov 2018**

***All Are Welcome***