WELCOME TO... Coasthaven TRAUMA CENTRE

HEY SARAH, HOW ARE THINGS GOING WITH MR SMITH, THE 88 YEAR OLD MAN IN RESUS 2?

DRAW THE LINE
WRITTEN BY DR. VUN PENG CHANG, MBBS, FACEM
ILLUSTRATED BY BEN MITCHELL, BA HONS

NOT GREAT. LOOKS LIKE HE HAS PNEUMONIA AND SEPTIC SHOCK.

HISTORY OF FEVER, WORSENING COUGH & SHORTNESS OF BREATH FOR 3 DAYS.

MULTIPLE CO-MORBIDITIES.

HE’S DELIRIOUS AND DRY.

Dr. Mark Mills
Emergency Medicine Physician

Dr. Sarah Jones
Emergency Medicine Resident

Written by Vun Peng Chang, MBBS, and illustrated by Ben Mitchell, BA(Hons).
**Draw the Line**

**HIS TEMP IS 38.5, BLOOD PRESSURE 90/80...**

*...AND OXYGEN SAT 92% ON 6L/Min OF O₂.*

*Chest X-ray shows consolidation in both lungs.*

**I'VE GIVEN HIM IV ANTIBIOTICS & SOME SALINE.**

**HE MIGHT NEED A NORADRENALINE INFUSION.**

**WHAT'S HE LIKE ON A GOOD DAY?**

**NOT TOO BAD.**

**ACCORDING TO HIS SON, WHO IS WITH HIM AT THE MOMENT...**

**HE HAS MILD DEMENTIA, WALKS WITH A WALKER...**

**BUT, HE REQUIRES MINIMAL ASSISTANCE AT HIS NURSING HOME.**

**DOES HE HAVE AN ADVANCE DIRECTIVE?**

**NOT AS FAR AS HIS SON KNOWS, HIS FATHER & THE REST OF THE FAMILY HAVEN'T DISCUSSED IT BEFORE.**

**LOOKS LIKE WE NEED TO HAVE A CONVERSATION ABOUT THIS.**

**LET'S GO SEE HIS SON.**
Draw the Line

Family

Mr. Smith! It's nice to meet you.

My name is Dr. Mills, and I am the emergency physician.

And this is Dr. Jones, the emergency resident.

We've just seen your dad, and I have to say he is not doing well.

Is he...

Is he going to die?

Mr. Smith, please take a seat.

We can explain what's happening to your dad.
WE THINK YOUR DAD HAS A SEVERE CHEST INFECTION.

FROM WHAT WE CAN SEE, THE INFECTION HAS SPREAD TO HIS BLOOD...

...AND HIS BODY SYSTEMS ARE STARTING TO SHUT DOWN.

HE HAS BECOME MORE CONFUSED; HIS BLOOD PRESSURE IS LOW...

...HIS KIDNEYS ARE FAILING, AND HE NEEDS LOTS OF OXYGEN.

THIS IS NOT GOOD... HE'S LEAVING US!

WELL, HE'S VERY SICK.

AT THE MOMENT, HE'S RECEIVING STRONG ANTIBIOTICS AND FLUIDS THROUGH THE IV DRIP.

...THERE'S A CHANCE HE WON'T GET BETTER, BUT WORSE, AND DIE.

GIVEN YOUR DAD'S LIMITATIONS PRIOR TO THIS HAPPENING...

WELL, MRS. SMITH...

THAT'S WHAT WE'D LIKE TO DISCUSS NEXT.

IN SITUATIONS LIKE THIS, TREATMENT BECOMES INTENSE.

WE TYPICALLY TRANSFER PATIENTS TO THE ICU, WHERE WE HAVE THE ABILITY TO USE MACHINES TO KEEP PATIENTS ALIVE.

IF HIS LUNGS FAIL, WE CAN PUT A TUBE DOWN HIS THROAT AND HAVE A MACHINE BREATHE FOR HIM.

WE CAN INSERT TUBES AND LINES INTO HIS BLOOD VESSELS AND ATTACH HIM TO A LIFE SUPPORT MACHINE.
Draw the Line

IN THE WORST CASE SCENARIO, IF YOUR DAD'S HEART STOPS, WE CAN PERFORM CPR.

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING, GIVEN HIS AGE & MEDICAL CONDITIONS, INVASIVE MEASURES LIKE THIS ARE LESS LIKELY TO HELP HIM SURVIVE.

IN FACT, THEY COULD BRING MORE HARM TO YOUR DAD.

SO, THE QUESTION IS, WOULD YOUR DAD WANT THESE KINDS OF TREATMENTS?

HAS HE EVER EXPRESSED WHAT HE'D LIKE TO DO WHEN HE REACHES THE END OF HIS LIFE?

NOT REALLY...

BUT I DO REMEMBER WHEN MY MOTHER WAS DYING IN HOSPITAL, HE SAID HE WISHED HE WOULD NEVER HAVE TO SUFFER LIKE SHE DID.

SHE WAS IN A GREAT DEAL OF PAIN BATTLING WITH BRAIN CANCER, AND SHE HAD SURGERY TO REMOVE A TUMOR BEFORE SHE WENT TO THE ICU.

AND AFTER SHE DIED...

MY DAD TOLD ME TO LET HIM GO PEACEFULLY...

WHEN HIS TIME COMES.
WOULD YOUR DAD WANT US TO TRY AGGRESSIVE TREATMENTS, EVEN IF THEY WERE UNLIKELY TO HELP?

I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN. I GUESS IF THE CURRENT TREATMENT DOESN'T HELP, HE WOULD WANT US TO KEEP HIM COMFORTABLE.

...OR, WHAT IF WE DIDN'T DO ANY OF THE THINGS I JUST DESCRIBED, BUT JUST FOCUS ON HIS COMFORT, INSTEAD?

NOT THE AGGRESSIVE TREATMENT... HE WOULDN'T WANT THAT.

ALRIGHT! THANKS FOR TELLING US MORE ABOUT YOUR DAD.

NOW, DR. JONES AND I HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT HE'D WANT.

WELL, DR. MILLS, THANK YOU FOR THE CHAT!

AND THANK YOU FOR LOOKING AFTER MY DAD!

I'M GOING TO MAKE SOME PHONE CALLS AND LET THE REST OF OUR FAMILY KNOW.

MY PLEASURE, MR. SMITH. I LOOK FORWARD TO TALKING AGAIN SOON.
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Author/Illustrator Information: Vun Peng Chang, MBBS, is an emergency medicine physician at John Hunter Hospital, Newcastle, Australia, with an interest in graphic medicine. Ben Mitchell, BA(Hons), is an illustrator and comic artist from Newcastle, Australia, currently completing a PhD in visual communication focusing on graphic narrative. He currently produces a comic book series named “Storm Clouds” and lectures at the University of Newcastle.

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