

To promote life quality of terminal patient with their own pets in hospice ward of medical center

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Introduction

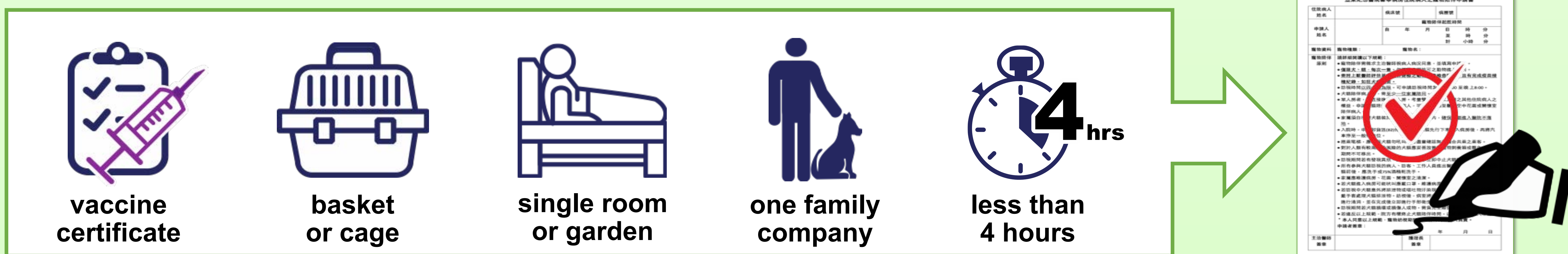
Hospice care aims to improve the medical care and life quality of the terminal patients. For mental health, animal-assisted therapy can provide comfort, peace, and soothing companionship. Far Eastern Hospital held 26 animal-assisted therapies during 2016-2018 in hospice ward, with a total of 283 participants, but some patients still missing their own pet. Therefore, we define “the process of pet visit in the hospice ward”, hope that patients could have a warm companionship with their pet on the end-of-life journey.



Methods

The patient or family can apply pet visit in the hospice ward. In order to avoid hindering other inpatients, the regulation must be agreed, including:

1. A vaccine certificate is required.
2. A basket or cage must be placed during transportation in the hospital.
3. At least one family member must company.
4. The pet companion space in ward must be an independent space such as “single ward”, or out in the garden.
5. The companion duration would be up to 4 hours during 08:00-20:00.



Results

This regulation has been implemented once since July, 2017. The patient and her family has been together with their dog in spiritual care room and garden about 30 minutes. Although the patient was weak to sit on bedside, she smiled and held the dog in her arms. The patient felt comfort and happiness even the dog just sitting there.



Conclusions

Considering the mental health of the terminal patient and maintaining the rights of other inpatients, the patient can have the direct companionship of their own pet under some restriction in the time and space. This kind of companionship is more close other than certified therapy dogs, and can't be replaced by Artificial Intelligence.