

It's Day Two in the OR for the Zhaotong 2018 mission. There are 7 surgeries on the schedule today, our first day for palate repairs. Patients range in age from 5 months to 12 years.

Today was also the first day for rounds by the surgeons to see the patients from yesterday. They are recovering very well. There is one patient in particular whose story really illustrates what is going on here and why this work is so important. Ling is 16 and traveled over 5 hours from her rural home where she lives with her boyfriend. Abandoned by her mother and raised by her step-mother and alcoholic father, she has seen and suffered so much in her young life in addition to the struggle of living day-to-day with a

Her parents could not afford to miss work and accompany her on the journey to the hospital. Therefore, she ran into problems providing consent for her surgery since she is underage. Her boyfriend was not eligible to provide the necessary consent, and as the afternoon progressed and the deadline for performing the surgery rapidly approached, it was unclear if she, after enduring so much to be here, would be able to have the surgery in the end.

The drama came to a head in the OR pre op area, and there was barely a dry eye in the ward, including the patient who had endured the ordeal with such grace and strength. Thanks to the diligence and creative perseverance of the head nurse Wang Jing, hospital administrators, and CPWF staff, they managed to contact the girl's step mother by phone who was able to give consent to surgery and satisfy all the stake holders - just 1 minute before the deadline. Had she not met the deadline, she would have missed this opportunity to change her life since the surgery schedule was already full and the waitlist was long. Everyone on the team breathed a huge sigh of relief. Her surgery was a huge success and she is looking great already!

