

Fully informed cancer patient died with no regrets as family members did not keep her in the dark of her conditions

46 year-old cancer patient Madam Foo passed away on August 1, 2011.

She was a positive and optimistic patient.

Her husband, three children and other family members tried to fulfil her last wishes and hopes so that she could leave in peace.

Madam Foo had breast cancer ten years ago and had a surgery.

Two years ago, the cancerous cells relapsed and spread, causing infection to her lung and brain.

During the many visits to hospital, she had discussions with her doctor and family members before every major surgery.

Equipped with information about her conditions, she made her decisions and received treatment dutifully.

One and a half months before Madam Foo's demise, she asked to go home. Her husband, Mr Tan granted her wish and arranged for HCA Hospice Care to provide her with regular hospice and palliative care.

He also took leave specifically to care for his wife.

Madam Foo's mother and sisters took turn to look after her, to share and lighten his caregiving load.

Madam Foo made her will in English and Chinese during her last days and put them in a box.

She asked her husband to read them only after she had gone.

She also specifically requested to wear a cheongsam on her funeral because she wished to look feminine.

Mr Tan had a cheongsam tailor-made for her three weeks before her demise.

Still grief-stricken with the loss of his beloved wife, Mr Tan said during the interview that not keeping his wife in the dark about her illness was beneficial to both the patient and the family members.

She took responsibility for her final affairs such as informing the family of the specific locations of certain mementos and giving them the opportunity to fulfil her last wishes by asking for specific food that she would like to eat.

Though the family was still deeply in grief by her departure, the thoughts of having accompanied her through her last journey brought solace to him.