

Seal Robot, PARO, as Neurological Therapeutic Device

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The beneficial effects of animal therapy have been well documented. However, there are many concerns with animal therapy such as allergies, cleanliness and the unpredictable nature of live animals. Inspired by the research on animal therapy, Dr. Takanori Shinbata, a senior research scientist at Human-Life Technology Research Institute and National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) in Japan, designed a therapeutic seal robot named Paro for use in various medical and caregiving institutions as well by individuals unable to care for a live pet. The S.H. Ho Centre for Gerontology and Geriatrics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Medical & Geriatric Unit, Shatin Hospital are proud to present a lecture by Dr. Shibata entitled “*Seal Robot, PARO, as Neurological Therapeutic Device*”. Held at the Shatin Hospital on 28 January, 2013, the lecture was chaired by Prof. Jean Woo, director of the centre. According to Dr. Shibata, Paro is expected to have psychological (e.g. increased motivation and improved mood), physiological (e.g. stress reduction) and social effects (e.g. encouraging communication) on elderly people and inpatients. Especially among dementia patients, behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia such as anxiety and wandering may be improved or inhibited. Furthermore, a follow-up meeting was held to allow further sharing of knowledge and to reinforce knowledge concerning the application of Paro in geriatric facilities and patient with dementia. The lecture drew over 70 participants from institutions, government, NGOs, etc.



Dr. Takanori Shibata (front row, 2nd left) and Prof. Jean Woo (front row, 3rd left) with PARO, doctors and occupational therapists of Shatin Hospital