



Left: The Baimao makeshift hospital in downtown Xuhui District

Below: German expat Martin Grega's room at the hospital.  
— Ti Gong



# Makeshift hospital stay turns positive despite misgivings

Zhu Yuting

For Serena and her husband, their stay at the Baimao makeshift hospital in Shanghai's downtown Xuhui District was definitely a special experience in their lives.

"Actually, it was not bad, and the atmosphere there was really good, everyone stayed positive and tried hard to get rid of the virus," she said.

The Chinese-French couple was infected with coronavirus in early April, when Shanghai just launched its lockdown measures.

"There was no place for us in the makeshift hospitals at first," she told Shanghai Daily, "so we just locked ourselves at home."

The stay-at-home period was not easy for them, as her husband got a really serious symptom of losing most of his senses of smell and taste.

"He could not even taste the difference between soy sauce and water," Serena said.

While fighting sore muscles and hypodynamic sickness, they also suffered social pressure from their neighbors.

"After we got infected, a few more people turned positive in our building," she recalled. "Although the infected neighbors lived really far from us, some



Patients do yoga at the Baimao makeshift hospital. — Ti Gong

neighbors were still afraid of being infected by us."

So, the two went to the makeshift hospital as soon as possible when their neighborhood committee informed them there were beds.

"Everything is organized at the Baimao makeshift hospital, it was not as bad as we saw online," she said.

"We had our meals sent to our room, so there was no need to worry about buying food online.

"We met some other foreign friends there; we could talk and do exercise

together. Also, there was no pressure from neighbors, which was really good."

Serena and her husband also gave some tips for people who are preparing to be admitted. Bring necessities, such as slippers, shampoo, shower gel, ear plugs and eye covers.

"You will have no idea which hospital or site you are going to live in, so making full preparation will help you avoid inconvenience," she observed.

People need to stay in the hospital until their PCR test turns negative twice, Serena revealed.

"And they will call you on the third day that you do not need to take the test, and on the fourth morning, you can go home."

The couple is back home now.

"Optimism and kindness are the key points to fight against adversity," she said with a laugh. "And the antibody we got from COVID-19 is a gift after all the suffering."

Another patient, Martin Grega, a German photographer, decided to use his camera to record his life at the Baimao makeshift hospital.

"I was sick on April 5 and then tested positive on April 7," he said.

After waiting for nearly two weeks, he finally got a call from the local CDC

saying someone would pick him up to take him to a makeshift hospital.

With a nervous feeling, he arrived at the makeshift hospital after a short ride on April 21.

"I was not sure what to expect, but the experience was actually not that bad," he recalled.

"The check-in procedure was pretty quick and the people working there were very friendly."

However, due to a lack of hands, he found there were no bed sheets prepared for him when he entered his room, Grega contended.

"So, I had to go back out and search for fresh bed sheets and pillows and blankets."

There are about two to four people sharing a room at the hospital, according to Serena and Grega.

Grega shared a room with a Canadian at first, then had it to himself.

"The room was pretty OK, and I had a shower and a toilet for myself," he said.

"The Wi-Fi was very fast although the bed was quite hard."

The building he lived in housed mostly foreigners who really maintained a positive mood.

"Everybody was friendly and talkative," Grega said.