

World Orthopaedic Concern Ethiopia bursary report Bahir Dar Orthopaedic Network and Exchange with Severn (BONES)

30th September – 11th October 2019

This was the first official visit of the Bahir Dar Orthopaedic Network and Exchange with Severn (BONES). After a considerable amount of preparation and preliminary visits from David Woods (Consultant upper limb surgeon, Swindon) and James Berwin (Specialist Registrar, Severn Deanery) a team of UK faculty spent two weeks in Tibebe Ghion Specialised Hospital. During James' last visit in March 2019 the hospital remained under construction, however the team were pleased to see it had now transformed into a fully functioning hospital with emergency department and operating theatres.

The hospital itself is situated approximately 10-15 minutes drive out of town, and forms part of an extensive new development including library, dedicated research building and accommodation for the local doctors. There has clearly been considerable investment from Bahir Dar University, and the excitement and enthusiasm is clear to see in the young residents and attendings. It is one of two hospitals in the town serving an estimated population of 17 million from the entire Amhara region, not just the immediate town population of 650,000.



Following previous discussions with local surgeons (Dr Worku, Dr Bini and Dr Teshome) we had been asked to deliver a Primary Trauma Care (PTC) course during the first week. The team drew on the expertise of Ruth Spencer (retired anaesthetist) and David, who had both previously taught on such courses. The course was a fantastic success, it was clear by the way newly trained local faculty delivered the second 2-day PTC course our place as educators had become redundant – just what we had hoped for!

The pre and post-course MCQ's confirmed educational progress of all students on both courses. Concerns raised during the course were mainly around leadership during trauma calls. As such, candidates particularly appreciated the scenarios, which gave them the opportunity to practice in a safe space. It became apparent a number of students had never used simulation as a learning method prior to the course. However it was astonishing how rapidly the entire group adapted and the level of knowledge was excellent.



Unusually, as part of the PTC course, we found time to sit in small focus groups and openly discussed the challenges faced by front-line healthcare workers when dealing with trauma in the new hospital. With little input from the UK team, local doctors were able to identify a number of improvements to current practice. These included; inability to intubate patients within the emergency department, no way of assembling multi-specialty team when required and poor collaboration between different specialties. Concerns were collated and submitted to Dr Teshom, head of Orthopaedics, who accepted with great humility and showed great appetite to make Tibebe Hospital a centre of excellence going forward.



The second week provided the UK team an opportunity to build upon relationships made during the first week. We spent time in the morning trauma meetings, ward rounds and outpatient clinics, learning more about how the hospital is run and how best the link can support the local orthopaedic department. David Woods used the morning ward rounds as an opportunity to teach the local residents, clearly gratefully received. A number of the more senior residents are imminently sitting their exit examinations and had requested specific upper limb teaching.

It is clear to me that trips such as these hold significant educational value not only for local trainees but also for myself as a UK trainee. There were many opportunities for case based discussions as well as mini-CEX's and Observation of Teaching. Clinical encounters challenge your way of thinking as well as communication and diplomacy skills. I look forward to further trips to Bahir Dar and have no doubt the link with flourish in the coming years.

It's an exciting time for global surgery, particularly orthopaedics. The trauma and orthopaedic statutory advisory committee now officially recognise overseas visits as study leave (for short visits) or approving longer visits as part of training. There is ever increasing numbers of trainees who are showing an active interest in global surgery and we hope links such as these will continue to take a keen interest in trainee involvement.

This trip would not have been possible without the tireless work of both James and David from the UK team and Dr Bini and Dr Bekalu from Bahir Dar. I would also like to thank World Orthopaedic Concern for their ongoing, generous financial support.

D Yeomans

For a more in-depth report on our PTC course please visit www.primarytraumacare.org