



*FlySpec Founder  
Professor John Jellis OBE*



**ORTHOPAEDIC  
FLYING**

**ZAMBIA**

**OUTREACH**



**WINTER 2021**

# FLYSPEC NEWSLETTER



*Dr Goran Jovic Consultant Plastic & Reconstructive Surgeon  
prepares a skin graft for a baby with extensive burns*

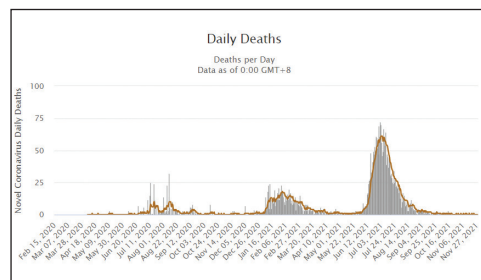
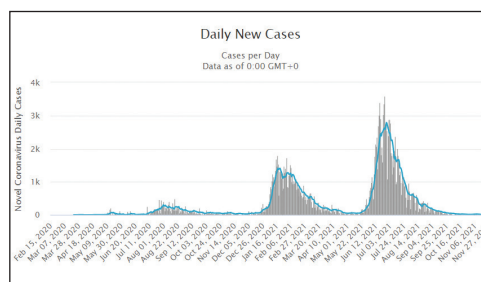
**FlySpec**, Zambia's specialised medical flying doctor service has brought dedicated and skilled orthopaedic and reconstructive plastic surgery to individuals in remote and rural communities since the early 1980s. Such specialised treatment would otherwise not be possible for the people living in areas outside Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. Most patients simply cannot afford either the money or the time to make the journey to Lusaka. FlySpec delivered surgery can be both lifesaving and life changing for many people, enabling them to live a productive life within their community. Most of the patients treated by the service are children. Surgery aims to treat congenital deformities such as Club Feet, Cleft lip & Palate along with Bone & Joint infections, Neglected Fractures, and Burns of all ages, including the resulting devastating complications.

Death rate from lack of Surgical Input is more than the combined death rates of Aids, TB, Malaria and all causes of Maternal and Child-hood illnesses - greater than 15 million per year.


**The majority of these deaths are in rural areas.**

*Lancet Commission report on Global Surgery*

## Current Covid 19 Situation Zambia



Last updated: November 29, 2021, 10:07 GMT

 **Zambia**

Coronavirus Cases:  
**210,143**

Deaths:  
**3,667**

Recovered:  
**206,386**

Zambia like many African countries has been adversely affected by the virus, however daily new cases and deaths are at a level < 1% of the peak in July 2021. Preventative measures including mask wearing and social distancing continue to be advised with vaccination being encouraged by the government. All anti Covid measures are being reinforced in light of the emergence of the recent Omicron variant.

2 cases of Omicron variant reported in Zambia November 25th 2021

### Vaccination

Zambia has administered at least **1,062,540** doses of COVID vaccines so far. Assuming every person needs 2 doses, that's enough to have vaccinated about **3%** of the country's population.

REUTERS Covid - 19 Tracker



Despite the challenges of the last 20 months FlySpec has continued to operate at significant capacity delivering much required care to the remote and rural communities of Zambia. Numbers attending outreach clinics was reduced as patients stayed away from hospitals. In line with much of the rest of the world a huge backlog of patients desperately requiring urgent surgical intervention is accumulating daily.

## FLYSPEC ACTIVITY 2021

**Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery**

Operations: **216** Patients Seen: **498**

**Orthopaedic Surgery**

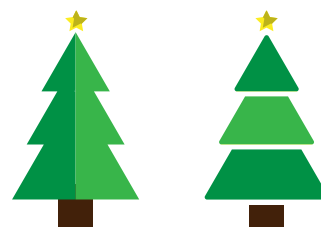
Operations: **607** Patients seen: **2325**

Total **57** visits to Hospitals

Total Flying time **158.7** hrs

Distance Flown: **19,482** Nautical Miles

Distances by Road: **16,786** Kilometres





## The FlySpec Team

*Consists of*

**1 Consultant Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon** - Dr Goran Jovic.

Goran is also the pilot for many of FlySpec's trips

**8 Local Orthopaedic Surgeons** ( based in Lusaka) All these surgeons work during the week but give their time for FlySpec between Thursday afternoons and Sundays when the Charity undertakes it's flying specialist visits .

**A ninth orthopaedic consultant** (and pilot) from overseas Mr Alberto Gregori visits regularly throughout the year to support the service along with an Emergency Medicine Consultant, Dr. Trish O'Connor

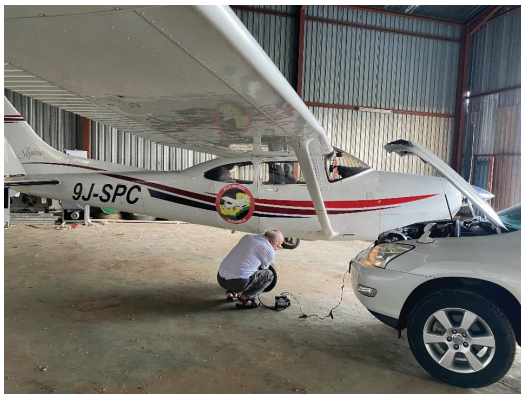
## A TYPICAL FLYSPEC DAY – UP BEFORE SUNRISE!

The orthopaedic surgeon and trainee meet with Dr Goran Jovic at the crack of dawn on a Thursday at Kyindu airstrip near Lusaka.

### Checking the plane and loading up

Loading up the plane correctly with all the equipment required for operating on many patients is critical for the weight & balance and safety of the aeroplane. FlySpec brings it's own medical supplies on trips to prevent depleting local hospitals of their limited resources. Flying to remote areas may involve up to 4-5 hours flying time.

### Planes can have flat tyres just like cars !



*Dr Jovic inflating the tyres – safety is paramount*



*Strategic loading up at sunrise*



*Ready For Take Off*

*Dr Giorgio Lastroni and trainee surgeons  
Drs Mpabalwani & Phiri.*

Landing at remote rural airstrips is frequently an inspiring experience as the welcoming local people, particularly the children seem to appear from nowhere laughing and waving in delight.



*A Flying Challenge  
- the weather in the rainy season*



## The Assessment Clinic



The team along with all the kit is then taken to the local hospital where clinical assessment of the patients begins in the wards and outpatient department.. Many patients travel long distances in the hope of accessing vital surgery. The clinic may include over hundred patients and run on late into the evening.

Friday is the main operating day but where there are many patients requiring surgery, operating may continue into the early hours of the morning or into Saturday. In this case the surgeons may not leave until Sunday afternoon - the weather is not always FlySpec's friend !



*Dr David Friend Surgeon at Mukinge Hill Mission Hospital discusses patients for surgery with Dr Mwamba Mulenga*



*Home made traction on the ward using string and water bottles. Such treatment involves many weeks of bedrest and hospitalisation.*



*Nailing lower limb fractures particularly in young people can mean a better outcome with an earlier return to mobility , home and work.*



*Hospitals frequently lack correctly sized anaesthetic/monitoring equipment. This baby's oxygen levels are being monitored with an adult finger probe due to lack of paediatric equipment*



*Basic paediatric anaesthetic equipment donated by Medaid International UK. Vital equipment but bulky and expensive to transport via the airlines.*



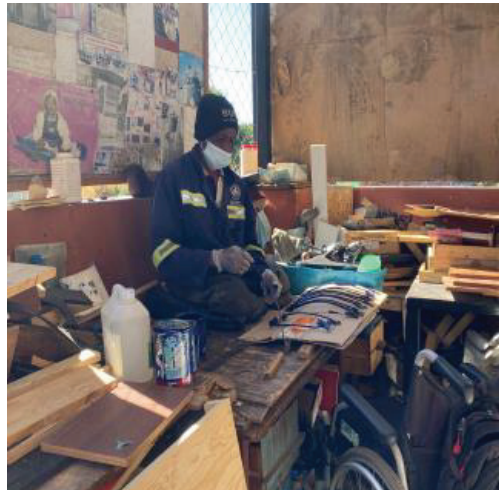
*Rebecca, anaesthetic clinical officer from Mbala delighted to receive essential emergency paediatric equipment.*



*Donated Equipment leaves Scotland to be shipped to Africa*

**FLYSPEC PROVIDES NOT ONLY SURGERY FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES BUT ONGOING SUPPORT WITH PROSTHESES, BRACES AND SPECIALISED LOCALLY MADE WALKING AIDS**

## A Local Zambian Enterprise



These Foot braces are made by local disabled people working from the Beit Cure Hospital in Lusaka



This Prosthetic leg transforms this little boy's mobility allowing him to walk, run and play.

Much of the work with prosthetic limbs in Zambia and Malawi has been developed by the Scottish NGO '500 Miles' established by Olivia Giles

Read more at [www.500miles.org](http://www.500miles.org)

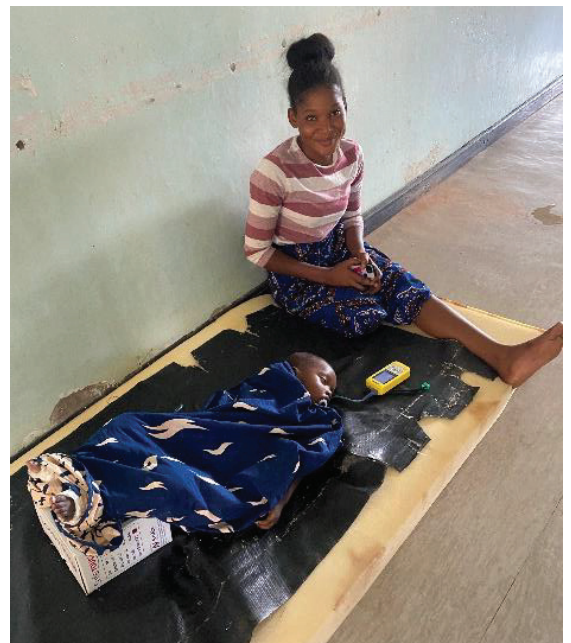




## Congenital Deformities

### Club Foot Surgery

This operation prevents children walking abnormally on the sides of their feet which would destroy the foot as the Child gets older. Surgery dramatically changes lives *allowing children to walk, go to school and develop normally. Untreated Club foot in adulthood causes major disability.*



This 2 year old boy recovers after bilateral club foot surgery. His mother is delighted!

## Dr Goran Jovic's Work with Cleft Lips and Palates and Burns Patients

### Cleft Lip & Palate

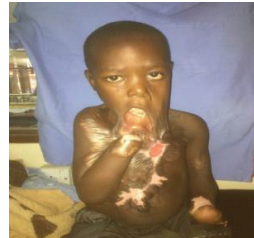


*This child's life is transformed both functionally and cosmetically by repair of her cleft lip and palate. She will be able to grow up normally without rejection by the community.*

**Burns are a frequent and overwhelming problem in many LMICs- particularly for children**



*Severe burns in an infant. Dr Jovic applies skin grafts to the burned areas. This baby recovered well*



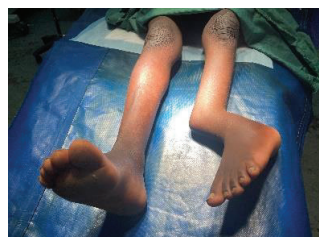
*Burns contractures leading to difficulties eating & moving the arms. After surgical contracture release this child can function normally including returning to school*

**Neglected Trauma and late presentation for treatment is common place in Africa. Subsequent complications including loss of mobility & livelihood can be devastating .**



*This man sustained an open fracture to his lower leg after an RTA 10 weeks earlier His leg was grossly infected and the bone had died. He was septic and required significant resuscitation before surgery.*

*Unfortunately the lower leg had to be amputated but the patient is delighted to be alive and well and mobile again with crutches*



*This 8 year old boy was walking on this painful deformed fracture for months. The leg has been straightened and pins applied. He can return to school – his mother was overwhelmed after surgery.*





Fractured femur after an RTA utilizing two sticks for splintage. External fixation with metal work or intramedullary nailing will help this fracture heal.



A happy little girl high 5s' Dr Colin West orthopaedic surgeon, after her successful operation the day before

## AVIATION UPDATE

Cessna 182S 9J-SPC has returned to service following the installation of a new "0" timed engine. Our Cessna 206H 9J-LOR has recently returned from the first stage of a refurbishment where the exterior was refurbished, with corrosion and stone damage from the rough airstrips being addressed in South Africa. The windscreen was also overhauled and the interior spruced up with new seat covers and door liners. Bush planes have a hard time! Repairs to the flight instruments and autopilot were also undertaken. New upgraded instrumentation and navigation equipment is being installed over the new year to allow easier and more accurate flying, especially an issue with the poor visibility in the months before the rains finally clear the atmosphere of dust and smoke.

Cessna 206H 9J-LOR



Cessna 206H 9J-LOR looking good post makeover in South Africa



Cessna 182S 9J-SPC



## Appeal - Medical Aviation needs Transport Aviation Help!

FlySpec brings its own equipment when it arrives for a surgical visit and donated materials from developed countries have helped significantly with the delivery of vital care to impoverished outreach areas. While such donated equipment is essential, an ongoing challenge for FlySpec is addressing the high costs of transport from the donor country to Zambia. We are

now appealing to airlines for sponsorship and support to facilitate transport of essential humanitarian medical equipment to Zambia. Transport of such equipment can mean the difference between a patient receiving a life saving or life changing operation or this not being possible leading to a bleak outcome

### THANK YOU / Acknowledgements

Thanks to Wings of Hope for assisting in the procurement and cost of SPC's new overhauled engine.

A big thank you also to the Beit Trust who has been very generous in allowing us to refurbish LOR and upgrade its Avionics.

Thanks to John Taylor in volunteering his services freely as a pilot to FlySpec missions and ferrying LOR to South Africa for its refurbishment. Thanks also to Richard Jeffery for supporting our pilot's recurrency training.

A huge thanks also to the Christadelphian Meal a Day fund for its longstanding and generous support of our outreach program.

We are also grateful to The Lusaka Caledonian Society and the Aylmer May Cemetery Trust for continued help towards flights and costs.

We are also grateful to the generous continued support of MedAid International in providing surgical and anaesthetic Equipment for our trips and sponsoring Gaynor Maher to help with production of our newsletter.

FlySpec also appreciates the ongoing donation from many Scottish Hospitals of Surplus medical Equipment.

A special thankyou also to the family of Paul Keegan for their recent generous support.

Continued thanks to our long term supporters, Wings of Hope, ReSurge International and Smile Train.





Wishing Everyone a very Happy  
and Healthy Christmas & New Year!



**YOU CAN NOW DONATE DIRECTLY TO FLYSPEC  
AND INCLUDE GIFT AID ON [WWW.WOCUK.ORG](http://WWW.WOCUK.ORG)**

And leave Comment to be given to FlySpec

**[www.flyspec.org](http://www.flyspec.org) for non UK donations and more info**

**WE NEED YOUR HELP AS EVERY DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

