

Report on Module 1, 2015 – Introduction to Orthopaedics

Module 1 was held at the National Referral Hospital Conference room in Honiara Solomon Islands from February 2nd to February 11th, 2015. There were 5 trainees in this module including 4 new trainees. They are Dr. James Tewa'ani from Solomon Islands, Dr. Kabiri Itaka from Kiribati, Dr. Areta Samuelu from Samoa, Dr. Basil Leodro from Vanuatu and Dr Mark Rokobuli from Fiji.

The lectures were delivered by Dr. Hermann Oberli, Dr Gerold Lusser and Dr. Christian Gubler from Switzerland, Dr. Matt Hope and Dr. Des Soares from Brisbane and Dr. Patrick Houasia and Dr. Silent Tovosia from Solomon Islands. In addition our 3rd year registrar trainees Alex, George and Stephen each delivered a lecture on clinical examination.



In the Introductory module the students were taught a systematic approach to diagnosis in orthopaedics. This included clinical history taking and a thorough clinical examination with emphasis on a systematic approach to the examination of bones and joints. Each lecture consisted of a practical demonstration of the clinical examination followed by a detailed explanation and then an opportunity for the students to practice the examination skills on each other. In addition there were focussed lectures on investigation and the use of radiological and other imaging investigations.

The students were assessed with a live clinical examination on the final day of the course. Overall the 10 day module was intense and it was obvious the students were stimulated to learn. There was a marked improvement in their clinical examination skills. They spent most evenings revising the material as each day always commenced with a review session of the material taught the day before. The students are now already reading ahead to prepare for the next module on the Knee commencing on 8 June 2015.

Lectures were supplemented with practical demonstrations. Each morning we commenced with a ward round seeing six patients and getting the students to present the history and clinical signs of the patients. Their management was then discussed and suggestions for improvement were made. This was a useful exercise as we were able to improve clinical skills. It was also helpful to try and elucidate clinical reasoning and decision making and help with developing these skills. There has been improvement with each module in the simple clinical tasks such as culture swabs and followup xrays now being ordered because of repeated encouragement in previous modules. There are still some frustrations with suboptimal management of trauma but there is ongoing improvement.



In the afternoons we did a practical exercise involving a surgical skill. The focus was on closed management of fractures as well as on practical workshops on internal and external fixation of fractures using plastic “bones”. These were greatly appreciated by the students as they were directly relevant to clinical problems they face daily. These involved basic trauma skills (learning the principle of the lag screw and tension band wire as well as application of an external fixator to a tibia and femur.

Our thanks to the staff and patients of the National Referral Hospital Honiara and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Solomon Islands Government for the use of the Conference room and for allowing us to conduct the course there. Our thanks also to our caterers from the Mothers Union Womens group who provided nutritious food for the duration of the course. Finally this module would not have been possible without the generous financial support from Peace Nexus Foundation and Hans Joerg Wyss.