

PIOA/SI MHMS Vanuatu Medical Relief Trip

Personnel: Dr Stephen Kodovaru and RN Mary Siriai

Positions: orthopaedic Registrar and orthopaedic theatre/fracture clinic nurse

Objective: To assist the surgical team at VILA CENTRAL HOSPITAL and other teams where appropriate following cyclone Pam

Place of work: VILA CENTRAL HOSPITAL (VCH)

Period: 24th March 2015 to 5th April 2015.



Photo 1 VCH entrance

The team left Honiara by Fiji Airways flight 5pm on 24th March 2015 and arrived in Vila 7pm the same evening. We were met by Dr Basil Leodoro (General Surgeon and also PIOA trainee) and checked in at the coconut palms resort. There was a meeting at 8am the next day at the VCH conference room and we met the medical superintendent and the various division heads and the foreign medical teams (FMT). We later went with Melanie (who coordinated FMT registration) from New Zealand - Health Specialist Limited (HSL) to the ministry of health to get registered. I manage to get registered by Thursday while Mary Friday.

Cyclone pam had mostly affected 2(Tafea and Shefa) of the 6 provinces of Vanuatu with part of a 3rd province (Penama). Vila on Efate island is part of Shefa province. Vila Central Hospital (VCH) being the major referral for the southern provinces affected received most referrals. Luganville on Santo Island to the north is the other referral hospital.

In the surgical team daily work rota were Dr Dyxon Hansell a General Surgeon from Samoa, Dr Samuel Kemuel a local General Surgeon, Dr Li a Chinese surgeon and Registrar Dr Ricky. Dr Basil Leodoro provides cover on calls as he is involved heavily with medivac and foreign medical teams

(FMT)/ministry of health coordination and Chief surgeon Richard Leona is also the Medical superintendent provides oversight to the team while managing overall hospital clinical services.



Photo 2 L-R Dr Hansell, Sr Dorothy (OT in charge), Dr Kemuel, Dr Kodovaru, Dr Oba (JICA, orthopaedic surgeon)

The activities that we were involved in are all existing services like, ward rounds every day that starts around 8am, theatre every day that follows the rounds, clinic one day and first on call for surgery for 7 days of the possible 10 days calls for the assignment period. RN Mary worked with the theatre team during the period. (See attached spreadsheet for detail timetable of activities). Majority of cases admitted are limb infections most from diabetes others include acute abdomen, prostate, malignancy, and trauma. Cases/opportunities for operative orthopaedic intervention are minimal during the period and most fractures were managed with manipulation and casts. The ward has 100% occupation during the period, with spillage into the 16 beds in medical ward. The surgical ward with 30+ beds serves also as a gynaecology ward. Elective list have also not started for the period.

The OT staff held a farewell lunch for the visiting anaesthetist from Fiji National University (Dr Kenton Biribo) and extend it to Mary and myself on Thursday 2nd April (before the long Easter weekend)



Photo 3 operating theatre staff

The Contribution is small but provides down time for the local team after the busy initial response and time to their families and moreover, provides a symbolic gesture to our colleagues that we all care at this difficult period.

Dr Richard Leona and their team at VCH have also acknowledged our team for the assistance rendered to them during the period and have asked us to relay this to PIOA and MHMS.

We left Vanuatu on Solomon Airlines flight Sunday 05th April 2015, 10.20am

Acknowledgement

Mary and I would like to thank Pacific Islands Orthopaedic Association (PIOA) and Solomon Islands Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) for enabling us to travel to Vila and the Staff of Vila Central Hospital (VCH) especially surgical team, ward staff and OT staff for their tremendous support and help during our stay. We were made to feel part of their team.

Dr. Stephen Kodovaru