

Friends of African Nursing

Newsletter

NEWSLETTER

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Chairman of Trustees Report

Malaria claims the lives of more than 400,000 people every year, and many more are sick repeatedly and have to stop working. Children under 5 years old are particularly vulnerable and more than one quarter of a million die from the disease annually. One child dies from malaria every two minutes. I will remember the nurse in intensive care in a rural Malawian hospital describing what their ICU is like in “malaria season” - after the first rains when the mosquitoes are first born. Rows of small children and babies lying on a wide wooden shelf with nets over and screaming ill children. It broke my heart. African countries have made great strides in recent years in the fight against the disease, using insect—treated mosquito nets, indoor spraying with insecticides and anti-malarial medicines. There is a newish vaccine which has been used in a pilot programme in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi. The pilot aims to demonstrate that it can significantly reduce malaria and life-threatening, severe malaria in young African children.

WHO has since 2017 supported a group of 21 countries making enormous efforts to eliminate malaria.

In 2019, Algeria became the third country in Africa to be certified malaria—free. This the result of a well trained workforce, a rapid response to disease outbreaks and a resolve to leave no-one behind: everyone in the country receives free diagnosis and treatment, regardless of nationality or legal status.

Common drivers of success across the regions have been political commitment to ending the disease, which translates

into local funding and actions to prevent malaria transmission and save lives. For World Malaria Day 2021 on 25 April, a new vaccine has just finished trials and has been shown to be even more effective than the first. This was produced by the same laboratory in the Oxford Jenner Institute as produced the Astra Zeneca Covid Vaccine. The first trials have taken place in Burkina Faso in 450 children and shown up to a 77% efficacy rate over 12 months. This is a wonderful outcome but needs testing in a larger trial, involving 4,800 children in four countries.

Gareth Jenkins of Malaria No More UK welcomed the news and said “we can end malaria in our generation but only if governments invest in research needed to deliver the new medicines and products that can accelerate the end of this terrible disease. The Jenner Institute’s groundbreaking work on both Covid-19 and malaria vaccines is a great example of this and demonstrates just how much humanity’s safety is dependent on new science.” (1) We have come to admire anew the effects of investments in scientific medical research in the age of Covid-19. It is wonderful to think that the same science could just maybe reduce the horrors of malaria in tropical areas of the world, which take so many lives and cause so much illness and death in small children. We need an effective vaccine and keep our fingers firmly crossed for the next trial and it’s success.

Kate Woodhead

1. The Guardian 21/04/2021

20th anniversary virtual conference

We are delighted to announce that we will be holding a conference for African Nurses on June 12 2021.

We have a full complement of speakers from around the continent and beyond. The theme of the conference is Infection Prevention and Control and will highlight current practice in Operating theatres. It will also include a session by Joel Kopodo on implementing best practice in Endoscopy work in operating

rooms. Often undertaken by the night team, urgently. The team members need to be educated on the special conditions needed for best practice. There is also a session on the aerosol generating mechanisms in Covid-19 surgical patients and how to manage the risks to staff and patients.

If the nurses are not able to join us on that

day, the conference sessions will be available on-line for a month after the event. We will report back on the event and subsequent evaluation.

We are hoping for a well attended conference and believe this is 'core business' given the circumstances of Covid and where we are in terms of face to face delivery.

Marvellous Rwandan Art, for sale in the hotel.



Victoria, one of the Ghanaian staff from MSSSI with her daughter, showing how it's done!

While Covid raged

We have not been in charity lockdown—in fact, we have achieved a great deal considering that many trustees work in healthcare. We have updated all the charity policies, the brochure about the charity, the website has had glitches removed, updated the Terms of reference and last but by no means the least, we have updated all the on-line education modules. More than £1,000 was added to charity funds from the making of re-usable facemasks and we had monthly meetings throughout—thanks to the glory of technology.

I would like to give my colleagues a huge vote of thanks as while they have been toiling under difficult circumstances at work, they have continued to contribute to FoAN activities, despite their exhaustion. Thank you. Kate

Books2Africa and FoAN boxes of books to the continent

We have recently sent three boxes of books to a fellow UK charity, Books2Africa, which sends books to African universities, schools and other academic institutions around the continent. They were medical books, some very large tomes which would not have fitted our suitcases!

However, we also made a birthday commitment to send a box of nursing books to a hospital on the continent somewhere, each month. So far we have sent a box each to colleagues in Malawi, Kenya, Ghana and Botswana. There will be more to follow.....



This is Annie Shaba, one of our Clinical Ambassadors from Malawi, with some of the selection of books which were sent to her and her colleagues. Postage is not 100% reliable, so it is always joyous to receive notification from the recipient, that the books have safely arrived.