

Ghana 2009

Benchmarking visit

The second visit to Ghana was made in May 09 to undertake the benchmarking across three centres. Three of us made the visits, Lesley Fudge, Trustee, Lesley Wood from Addenbrooke's and Taonga Mhone from Chelmsford, although originally from Malawi.

The plans had been made in conjunction with the team of tutors from the Perioperative and Critical Care School of Nursing at Korle-Bu Hospital Accra and our first visit was to this hospital Korle-Bu is the largest hospital in the country and is the University Teaching Hospital.

We first visited the Ministry of Health and were warmly welcomed. The Minister and Chief Nurse were in Geneva at the time but we explained the background of FoAN and our previous visit and introduced the purpose of this one. The Deputy Minister was keen for us to introduce the WHO Safe Surgery Saves Lives (SSSL) strategy in all the hospitals we visited. We left one copy of the WHO papers at the Ministry and then at each site we visited.

Following the benchmarking visit at Korle-Bu, we introduced the WHO Safe Surgery Saves Lives Global Patient Safety Alliance strategy and were delighted that the hospital executives were keen to become partners as they were aware that over time standards had dropped at the hospital. We also found time to visit the Surgical Skills Unit at the hospital which has been partly funded by Johnson and Johnson and were pleased to see that a high quality of education for laparoscopic work was being given. Both doctors and nurses receive training. We had a long conversation about standards with the manager of the unit and the lead surgeon from Korle-Bu at this visit.



We introduced the theatre staff from Korle-Bu to the Safe Surgery Saves Lives strategy and were quite firm in our suggestion that in order to meet these fairly minimum standards, there was much that needed attention

Our second visit was upcountry in Koforidua where we undertook the benchmarking at St Joseph's Mission Hospital which treats mainly orthopaedic cases and is run by brothers from the Order of St John. This lovely hospital was celebrating the 50th anniversary of its opening and rebuilding much of the structure. We were able to visit the theatres although not all of us were able to enter. The team of six from Korle-Bu school of Perioperative Nursing had travelled with us and therefore nine additional people in theatres was just too many, so Lesley W and Tao having undertaken the process in Korle-Bu did the benchmarking here.

Later we introduced the Safe Surgery Saves Lives Global Patient Safety Alliance strategy to an audience consisting mainly of student nurses beautifully dressed in their green and white uniforms. They were very interested and the Director Brother Johannes signed the hospital up as partners in the strategy.

Our final visit was to Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana and in the Ashante region. We had a long and interesting journey upcountry and were there for two days. The hospital was large and in the process of re-modernisation. New theatres had been built for Trauma and Orthopaedics and whilst we did the theatre benchmarking in the old theatres, the decontamination and sterilisation element was done in the new unit where the instruments are processed for all theatres.



This teaching hospital was led by a motivated and visionary CEO and Director of Nursing Services and the 'can do' attitude had been passed to all staff. There was a real feeling of high standards, good patient care and professionalism throughout. We were delighted that the DNS knew about SSSL and was keen for the hospital to be involved. Many of the theatre staff and a surgeon, attended the session. At each of these events, Lesley F gave a presentation on the research behind SSSL, Lesley W a presentation on the practical application of the strategy reflecting on the work at Addenbrooke's and Taonga a talk on patient positioning to prevent harm. This was especially useful as it was apparent from the visit that some areas of patient safety were not being practiced as well as they could have been.



On each visit, we left gifts of journals, books, eye protection and pens for the staff and they were very pleased. We were also delighted that since the last visit a new perioperative organisation has been born under the auspices of the nursing regulatory body GRNA. The new organisation is to be called the Perioperative Nursing Group of Ghana (PNGG) and the first Board has been formed with the specialist tutor Caroline as the Chair. Caroline has been put in contact with the Zambian nurses group Chair, Judith Munthali for mentoring and support and also with James Harrison from the International Federation of Perioperative Nurses (IFPN) for possible future membership and links to ICN.

Ghana was very hot, an average temperature of the high 30's when we were there but the accompanying high humidity, it made the days sticky! We had some time at the beginning and end of the visit to get some local crafts and lovely fabrics and to become addicted to a local snack called kelewele which is deep-fried spicy plantains, not very good for the figure but so but so enjoyable that we all brought spices and the recipe home with us.

From these two visits, we have already identified the individuals who we believe should be offered the opportunity for leadership training on the next. They will be contacted via their individual hospitals or through the Ministry and brought to Accra for the workshop in 2010.