

Tanzania - April 2006

Benchmarking Visit

Tuija Hirva and Kate Woodhead set out with few arrangements finalised, and hoped that our travels around Tanzania for the benchmarking and audit visits would be successful.



We had planned to visit hospitals in Dar es Salaam, Moshi and Arusha. Tuija , winner of the Molnlycke Award 2006 had not visited Africa before and was really looking forward to the experience.

We flew into Dar es Salaam and by staying at the Sea Cliff Hotel enjoyed the wonderful views of the Indian Ocean, when we were not working.

We first visited Muhimbili Hospital where we were able to make a clinical visit to the Obstetric Theatres, observing practice and working together with the midwives, and the hospital initiatives on quality improvement, make some suggestions. After a local feedback session, we went to the decanted theatres (whilst a major refurbishment project is being undertaken in Main Theatres) to do a teaching session. In cramped conditions we were pleased to have a full room of different professionals to hear the sessions on universal (standard) precautions and negotiating in the workplace.

We visited the Director of Nursing Services to feedback on the visit, who was most supportive of the difference that FoAN had made to the knowledge of the individuals who had attended the initial course a year ago. He was pleased that we had returned, making practice improvement, a core element of the learning process. The following day a visit was made to the Aga Khan Hospital, where we were made most welcome and were consulted on a number of issues which the theatre staff had been concerned about. We also visited the Endoscopy unit, which was the best seen in Africa, to date. We fedback our comments to the Director of Nursing before departing. An early start was made to the airport to reach Arusha in the north of the country.



We were met according to plan, and driven to Moshi where the single theatre in Mawenza Hospital was very short of staff, but very busy. They had very poor resources. We were shown around the hospital wards and obstetric unit and found it hard to disguise our dismay and shock at what we saw.

The following day we went to visit Mount Mehru Hospital in Arusha, and whilst we took some time to get the appropriate permissions to visit theatres, when Tdeshi saw us, she gave us such a warm welcome, it was wonderful. Tdeshi is the Theatre Manager who had attended the course in Dar es Salaam last year. We spent most of the day in theatres trying to assist with a raft of difficult issues, including the fact that main theatres were built for other purposes and have no patient flows that are suitable. We delivered our teaching sessions in the operating theatres, and were delighted that the anaesthetist and medical assistants attended as well as the nurses. This unit is in special need of assistance - perhaps even a team visit to support all the professions working under such difficult conditions. We also went around some of the hospital wards and were once again distressed by the conditions which patients and staff have to endure.

A wonderful two days at nearby Tarangire National Park enabled us to debrief and return to work with many plans of how to help and assist the needy hospitals and professionals we encountered.

My sincere thanks to Tuija for her assistance, empathy and pragmatic approach to the difference we can make - in some circumstances. No doubt her excitement at the sights and sounds of the continent, will ensure she returns!