

## **Motec's JUNE 2010 Teams Return short of a World Cup Friendly**

*P. Ofori-Atta 17<sup>th</sup> July 2010*

At the onset, 2010 June trip to Ghana by Motec volunteers promised to be one of the most challenging working visits. And so it proved to be. Both the UK and Ghana were in the World Cup. UK based volunteers were joined by a local General Surgeons resident in Ghana to work in various target hospitals from the south to the very North of Ghana. There could have been some battles of 'hearts and minds' if Ghana had had to play England. Motec's main sponsors, Holland (government of) through the International Organisation for Migration IOM were also lurking around the English and Ghanaians. Other sponsors – The International Development Company (IDC), Dublin, Ireland certainly not the Hand of God - did not have representation at the games, perhaps led away by a handful act of Franco-deception – during the qualifiers, so the Irish problem was not so much remembered. Anyway, pre-travel planning mapped out other unique challenges for Motec and teams were formed to try to overcome them and support the health institutions make strides to improve health care. There was a lot of excitement in the air before the trip actually began more so when Motec's first largest group of trainees were returning from India to work with Motec at the New Surgical centre.

Volunteers looked forward to delivering lectures to health workers and students in the target health institutions and also supporting the staff in the provision of limited specialised clinical services in addition to the training opportunity that is always linked with our professional work. There was a quietly jubilant mood that Motec was going to welcome the Nurses that had benefited from Motec- IDC Nurses training initiative for 3 nurses from our target hospitals in India (Kattappana). On the other hand apprehension was rife following the disclosure of the difficulties of equipping and refurbishing the New Surgicentre at Asafo, the long distance travelling that would be involved in the delivery of our services. Besides, there were some volunteers venturing into the African World for the first time - daunting challenges for all volunteers.

Motec's main terms of reference included lecturing the health workers and students at the target hospitals and also supporting the clinical staff. Volunteers looked forward to initiating the international surgicentre at Asafo and provide educational services at the health care training institutions at Jirapa St Joseph's Hospital (3 institutions - Nursing, Midwifery and Public Health), Nkawkaw Nurses College / Public Health Services and Pramso St Michael's Hospital. Clinical Services were planned for Koforidua St Joseph's and Akosombo VRA Hospitals.

Dr Christine Amakye, the trip leader was supported by various members of the group comprising Caesar Mensah (Infection Control Nurse London), Felicity Adu - Mills (Palliative Care Nurse – former Public Health, London), Raymond Ofori – (Biomedical Scientist, Quest Diagnostics –London) Miss Rumariejoy Laude – Ward Nurse –Watford General Hospital, Eileen Chua – (Theatre Practitioner – Wellington Hospital, London. Others included P. Ofori-Atta – Ortho Surgeon –West Herts NHS Trust Hospitals, Audrey Lee (final year medical student – University of Cambridge Medical School) and Dr Ebenezer Narteh- the Senior General Surgeon at Akosombo Volta River Authority Hospital.

U.K based members travelled from London on three separate days. All however met in the Accra for a long journey to Sefwi Asafo through Kumasi picking up Dr Ebenezer Nartey from Akosombo. There were two main stopovers – Koforidua and Kumasi and the journey that started at about 9am in Accra ended with a safe arrival in Asafo at about 10pm without the Kattappana trained Nurses. The combined work planned with the sponsored Nurses (Tina Dogbe, Sylvester Owusu-Agyemang and Yvonne Gboglah) seemed to have fallen apart – so it seemed.

#### **Sefwi-Asafo St John of God Hospital and Koforidua St Joseph’s Hospital**



The team was welcomed by traditional drumming and dancing by the people of Asafo in the out patients department on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> of

June. A keynote address was delivered by Bro Bartholomew on the rationale behind the Surgical Centre. The introduction of Motec was left for the Motec President Mr Ofori-Atta to present.



Welcoming Motec to Sefwi-Asafo in Style



Lecture in session



Small group tuition for Student Nurses from the Regional Hospital

On rotation to Sefwi-Asafo by Mr Caesar Mensah and Dr Amakye

At Asafo, throughout the week lectures were delivered with regularity as in addition to clinical consultations at the Surgical Centre. Average lecture attendance was about 38 and daily tuition to 8 student Nurses from the regional hospital at Sekondi - Takoradi proved very popular. It was all smiles when the Nurses who had been sent to Kattappanna for training returned to base to join Motec at Asafo. The all-inclusive exchange of ideas, teaching and clinical services including surgery on children marked the peak of Motec's partnership with the Asafo St John of God's Hospital.



Four members of the group led by Mr Ofori-Atta proceeded to Koforidua on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> to provide clinical services at Koforidua St Joseph's Hospital (major orthopaedic surgery). Rest of the team completed the week at Asafo had a pretty excellent send off party and all left for Kumasi on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup>. Dr Amakye joined the Koforidua team for a night on the Kwahu mountain as Dr Narteh proceeded to Akosombo.

### **Jirapa St Joseph's Hospital**

An educational task force led by Mr Raymond Ofori was picked up by Jirapa St Joseph's Hospital from Kumasi. The Jirapa team of experts provided up intensive lectures but not before the warm welcome by a creature of God – a majestic non poisonous snake that lost its way home and joined the team for unwelcomed company.



Teaching in progress at Jirapa



Once the hurdle was overcome, the three volunteers delivered lectures – reviewed our ground project – Nutrition Working For Life (NUWLIFE) with the authorities and enjoyed the re-union with a patient Motec members and family members had supported through her journey into safety from ‘a certain death’.



The Vice President of Motec’s mother had promised ‘the young mother’ something to help her sustain healthy life. A donation of a sewing machine was presented to lady ‘F’ on behalf of Dr Amakye’s mother – grateful to her for her generosity.



Presentation of Computers to Nurses College at Jirapa

Also during this visit, Motec also presented two desktop computers worth about EU1,250.00 on behalf of IOM/MIDA to the Nurses Colleges during this visit to add up to other donations of Nursing literature to the Colleges from previous medical freight. In spite of anti-malaria prophylaxis, the team had the first malaria victim since the beginning of Motec about 4 years ago. Member has since recovered.

### **Akosombo VRA Hospital**

Four members of Motec volunteers Dr Christine Amakye, Miss Jo, Miss Len and Mr Ofori-Atta spent about a week at Akosombo VRA Hospital. transfer of skills to local doctors. Motec and the Hospital agreed to accept

a request from the Health Institutions to join Motec for exchange of ideas and acquisition of skills and experience. A three-man team led by Lt Colonel Awuku –orthopaedic trauma surgeon joined from Accra with a senior scrub nurse and a theatre technician while Dr Raphael Quartey joined from Koforidua. The combined team of Motec, VRA staff, the Military Hospital and surgeon from Koforidua provided clinical care in trauma and orthopaedics and delivered topical lectures which were very well subscribed. Work centred on the care of sickle cell bone and joint disease as the lectures concentrated on patient care and staff communication skills. Notably, this hospital continues to rely on the services of a physiotherapist from the Police Hospital to support our clinical work.

At the peak of the working visit, the team and the hospital were visited by IOM/MIDA –Ghana project Officer from Holland Mr Hans Eijkhout and the project Officer based in Accra Mr Daniel Sam. It was indeed an honour for Motec to have received the attention of the top ranking officers of IOM/MIDA. The Matron of the Hospital together with Dr Christine Amakye and a member of the Hospital administration took the visiting group on tour of the hospital.



Mr Hans Eijkhout and Mr Daniel Sam with Motec at Akosombo



Group photo after lecture at Akosombo

## **Nkawkaw Holy Family Hospital**

- A. Collaboration in this Hospital with the Primary Health Care (PHC) team was the main focal point during this visit. Mrs Felicity Adu-Mills spent about 24 hours at Nkawkaw and held discussions with the PHC team. She also presented two examination couches worth about six hundred pounds (£600) shipped by Motec to the PHC to replace the narrow unsafe wooden ‘planks’ used for examination of pregnant mothers in the village ‘mobile clinics. Motec wishes to thank Brentford Free Church for supporting this project to its conclusion.
- B. One final year Medical Student from Cambridge University was posted to this Hospital for one week. I am pleased that the Authorities accepted her for the exposure to African Diseases (rich). A full feedback reports are awaited from both parties.

## **Pramso Jachie St Michael’s Hospital**

Caesar Mensah and Raymond Ofori (Trustee Executive) were based in this Hospital for one week. They delivered lectures to the Nursing and Medical Staff on daily basis. Attendance was very encouraging.

## **Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Kumasi**

Mr Ofori-Atta and his team stopped over in Kumasi from Sefwi Asafo and met Dr Hemeng, an anaesthetist who was sponsored by MIDA-Motec initiative for Intensive Care of patients. At the meeting, the impact of her training in London on patient care and contributions to better care in the Anaesthetic department were discussed. Thrilling! The second candidate put forward by the Teaching Hospital for training in London – Dr Ebenezer Owusu Darkwa was interviewed and given guidance about the training programme. Assurances were given by both sides to maximise experience and improve patient safety in hospital.

Dr Awariyah who was present at the meeting represented the Trauma and Orthopaedic Department in the discussion about MOTEC’s Orthopaedic Trauma workshop in Kumasi scheduled for October.

## **Lecture Series**

Large audience Lectures delivered during the three –week long campaign in Ghana included the following:

Communication for better care

Documentation in health care  
Pressure Sores  
HIV AIDS  
Viral Hepatitis  
Bacterial Meningitis  
Peri-operative Care  
Post op pain Control  
Diabetes Mellitus  
Post Operative Nursing Care of a patient  
Health worker-Patient Relationship – impact on the patient’s health.  
Reducing post operative Wound Infection  
Vital Signs  
Tuberculosis  
Basic Infection Prevention  
Entrapment syndromes of the Upper limb  
Respiratory Illnesses.  
Nursing Care in an Indian Elite Hospital as seen by the Ghanaian Nurse.

Small group lectures to Students and House Officers included Public Health topics, Sickle Cell Disease, Wound Care, Sexually transmitted Diseases, Osteoarthritis – pathogenesis and treatment options etc

**Overview.**

Overall, the June trip was a difficult one but a lot of education, useful interaction with staff both from our target and the military hospitals. The lecture series were very popular at all sites.

Work on the ground was a bit slow at Asafo due to the concentration of our initial planning on full utilisation of the Surgical Centre which unfortunately was not fully operational. Efforts are being made to purchase the light sources and fit the necessary furniture, air conditioning, autoclave machine slight modification of doors to complete the centre for full utilisation. All the same the venue provided a pretty good educational centre and clinics for our work.

Work in other target hospitals went extremely well. Motec is proud of the educational support it provides at all the target hospitals. The feed back from the target Hospitals suggest that the topics are very relevant to the day to day practice and more hospitals especially other VRA Hospitals to involve them in the educational projects.

We are very grateful to our host hospitals for the total care of Motec volunteers. We recognise the difficulties in supporting large numbers and

Motec will persevere to trim the size of volunteers to effective small working groups relevant to the tasks. We remain committed to the collaboration.

### **Recommendations**

- It was observed that most of the target hospitals need to up-grade the laboratory services in order to provide safer diagnostic services. Thyroid function tests, more reliable sickling tests are among the few that have to be looked at very carefully at all the target laboratories. Stringent rules and extra microbiological services will be added bonuses at all sites.
- A training programme for local nurses and doctors to train/improve skills in diagnostic ultrasonography will be very popular indeed. Motec may include such training in her programme as these target hospitals already have local training in this field.
- A final effort to complete the surgical centre in order to make it operational as soon as practicable should be excellent news.
- The appreciation of the sponsored Nurses (India) of the value of their experiences in India suggests that the project has to be continued. In order to maximise the effectiveness of such project, hospital administrators have to be encouraged to support these nurses and also provide basic equipment to implement safer care protocols and routines.
- A dedicated team may have to stay on at Jirapa for a bit longer in order to interact with staff and students and also to deliver the 'objectives' of the collaboration without haste. It is too long a journey to Upper East to make a short working visit.
- Still very important for all volunteers to continue to take their anti-malaria tablets to minimise illnesses.
- Target Hospitals have to be encouraged to invest in human and material resources.
- Smaller groups of Motec teams could be made to work and lecture at target hospitals close to each other to minimise travel times.

Lecture preparations for the June trip has been one of the best and it is important that other volunteers emulate the example.

- Student inclusion in the Motec group seem to liven discussion and interest in teaching within Motec which impacts positively on our target Hospitals as a truly academic atmosphere is created all around.
- All members of the June group deserve a tap on the shoulder. My volunteers of the trip are however Felicity Adu-Mills and Caesar Mensah.
- International Exchange programme for health workers should be encouraged
- Post trip meeting in September combined with pre-travel October meeting should be considered. Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> September should be a suitable date close to the Dinner Dance that will also provide opportunity for planning the 25<sup>th</sup> September fund raising event.



At the last group supper before Motec closed one chapter



Dusk over the Volta River at Akosombo

‘I cannot believe that the purpose of life is merely to be happy. It is to be honourable, compassionate and above all, to stand for something. To have it make a difference that you have lived at all’.

Leo Rosten – Polish American – 1908.

Our sincere gratitude to our host hospitals, IOM /MIDA –Ghana, International Development Company, Dublin all of whom contributed significantly to the success of the trip. Volunteers deserve commendation for their selfless devotion to duty.