



2018 Kigali, Rwanda

Trip Report

OUR STORY: BY CHERYL PECK

Debut:

Rwanda Military Hospital September 23 - 28, 2018

In September, 2018, Operation Medical conducted its first Surgical Mission Rwanda Military Hospital the capital city of Kigali. The results were so successful that Operation Medical has been invited to return for another camp.



Hospital Signage

The Place:

Rwanda Military Hospital is located in Kigali, Rwanda, the modern capital city

of Rwanda. The city spans several ridges and valleys with lush hillsides, flowering trees, winding boulevards and bustling streets. It is arguably one of the most attractive capital cities in Africa, as well as easily one of the cleanest and safest. Kigali is spotlessly clean, partly because plastic bags are banned in the country but also because of a universal service called Umuganda when everyone gets together on the last Saturday morning of each month working on community projects like keeping streets clean, tending to gardens and helping neighbors, during which time many shops and businesses are closed for the morning.

Despite bearing the brunt of the genocide's unspeakable horrors in 1994, Kigali has been the center of Rwanda's nation-building efforts since that time. The rebirth of the capital has seen the arrival of new skyscrapers, several international hotels and a host of excellent restaurants. While Kigali has relatively few tourists, those that take the time to explore the city are rewarded by a friendly response from locals and a more rounded insight into the country as a whole.



Ambulance Arrival

Rwanda Military Hospital was built in 1968 as a Military Referral Hospital. It continued to provide health care services to the military and their immediate families until after the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi when doors were opened to the general population treating 80% civilian and 20% military patients.



Rwanda - Team Photo

Since its inception, the hospital has been offering primary, secondary and tertiary medical care. In the 2011-2016 strategic plan however, the focus was been directed towards transforming it into a full-fledged referral and teaching facility. The Government of Rwanda, through the Ministries of Health and Defense, is committed to offering quality health care services to the military and the general population through strengthening and refocusing RMH in terms of the infrastructure, human resources capacity building, equipment and management systems.



Coming to Visit Patients

Rwanda Military Hospital works in a multidisciplinary environment where they receive and refer both military and civilian patients where necessary from and to different specialists such as Orthopedic Surgery, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Gynecology and Obstetrics, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Dermatology etc.

The Story:

The 2018 Rwanda Mission Team arrived safely in Kigali in various groups from Friday, September 21st through late Sunday, September 23rd. The majority of the team spend Sunday morning unpacking and organizing the medical supply room and screening patients.

The team was thrilled with the large space in which to organize our supplies and serve as hub for team members between cases.



Our Supply Room & Touch Down Space

The hospital is laid out much like an academic campus with separate buildings for difference uses. The main operating rooms are located in one building and the gynecology procedures are performed in a building across the campus.

On Tuesday morning the Operation Medical Team was officially welcomed by the Commandant of the hospital and asked if we could return again next year!



Welcome Debrief with Commandant

Patients arrived from near and far to seek medical help. The regular gamut of hernias, hydroceles and hemorrhoids presented for treatment as well as thyroidectomies, burn scar contracture releases and excision of various cancerous tumors.



Waiting

The need for women's health concerns was most evident and the team worked tirelessly to help as many as they could safely treat. Issues range from fistulas (see patient spotlight) to uterine prolapse, and C-section incisions from months gone by that would not heal and were infected. Dr. Jeff Segil seized this golden opportunity to share and teach the Gynecology Department Chair, who was interested in improving his skills at being able to treat pelvic prolapse (when the uterus literally falls out of the body) and gifting the department with a special retractor called a Brietsky retractor, specifically designed for vaginal prolapse surgery



On Thursday morning, Dr. Bret Delone presented an in-service talk for the medical staff on the use of laparoscopic surgery. The hospital has asked for feedback from our team on where they may want to make any changes or improvements in process and delivery of care.



Dr. Bret Delone

Repeat and new volunteers remained healthy and enthusiastic working together "like a well-oiled machine". The staff at Rwanda Military Hospital has extended warm hospitality to the group and worked with the Operation Medical volunteers in the Operating Rooms as a cohesive team.



Preparing for Surgery



Teamwork

Over the course of 5 days, the group was able to perform 68 surgical procedures. The team used their skills to help patients, their families, co-volunteers and local hospital staff.

Operation Medical hopes to return to our Rwanda family in the coming years.

Volunteers continually share that the gift of giving is returned many times over being blessed by the experience.



Morning Debrief



Compassionate Care - PACU



In Charge of the Operation Rooms

CASES BY GENDER

Female 30
Male 38

There are always more to help than time allows, we leave a piece of our hearts with our new family at Rwanda Military Hospital and hope we will visit again soon.



PATIENT AGES

1 year to
77 years

PATIENT SPOTLIGHT



Valens Yadufashije – 25-year old male from the southern province of Rwanda where he works as a plumber. Valens made the long journey to RMH to help with a recurrent sarcoma on his upper chest. His condition was both physically and emotionally challenging as the masses protruded from his clothing and constantly leaked fluids. He was very self-conscious when Dr. Ken Arthur initially examined him. His surgery was performed successfully with the largest mass excised. The next day, Dr. Arthur rounded on his patients and when he entered Valens room, the young man had no problem showing his wound and with a smile of gratitude shook Dr. Arthur's hand thanking him for his renewed self-confidence and health!



PATIENT SPOTLIGHT



Theophile Munyaneze – 31-year old female from the eastern province of Rwanda where she works as a farmer. Theophile gave birth to a beautiful baby boy in June, 2018. During the delivery she suffered from obstetrical trauma resulting in a recto-vaginal fistula (a whole between the back wall of the vagina and the rectum). This devastating condition resulted in her being ostracized from her family and home in addition to on-going agonizing pain. Theophile found out about Operation Medical's surgery camp and scrapped together the funds to make the journey with her infant to seek help. Her life changing surgery was performed by Dr. Jeff Segil and the following day during rounds, he found her snuggling with her baby in the women's ward sharing that she had minimal pain. No longer having to be concerned with unpredictable stool passing she will be able to resume a normal life-style.



PATIENT SPOTLIGHT



Annonciate Musabyimana – 27-year old female from the rural countryside presented after 2-years of chronic and worsening complications from a C-section in her rural home. She initially suffered injury to her ureters (the tubes that bring urine down from the kidneys to the bladder during the emergency C-section due to heavy bleeding. The local hospital repaired the ureters, however after that she suffered from peritonitis – an infection in the abdomen resulting in pus in the abdominal cavity. If that were not horrific enough, as a result of the peritonitis, her bowel stuck to her abdominal wall, the incision broke down, and ultimately a piece of her colon fistulized to the abdominal wall meaning her stool exited through the broken-down abdominal wall. She was totally incontinent of both stool and urine with a 2-year out infected incision. Luckily our colorectal surgeon, Dr. Andy Richards was able to take down the colonic fistula, reconnect her rectum while our plastic surgeon was able to properly close the incision. Annonciate has a long road to recover, but would have had a much shorter life if she had not been able to receive this life-saving surgery.



MEDICAL STUDANT IMPRESSIONS

■ Isita Tripathy

Operation Medical enjoys the opportunity to bring pre-medical students from time to time to a mission trip and this trip we welcomed Isita Tripathy from southern California and Pravallika Sanke from Harrisburg, Pa. Both young women rolled up their sleeves and helped in the storage room, logging patient cases and running supplies to the operating rooms and observed several cases.

Isita wanted to share her impressions of the trip and she supplied us with a very thorough report. Below are some of the highlights:

"On the Sunday before surgeries began, I felt completely overwhelmed. First of all, I was on a mission trip with a team of unknown doctors and nurses with much more wisdom and experience than an eager college student. And with supplies and team members running around, everything felt even more chaotic. But by the first day of surgeries, I was impressed at the way each person integrated into a completely new environment and took charge of his/her role. From scrub nurses anticipating surgeons' needs to team members gathering items from the store room, the fluidity of the OR completely juxtaposed the chaos of the previous day.

And as a result, the kind of exposure I gained on this trip was invaluable. As a student, I was amazed at many of the things health workers consider "normal." For example, seeing Dr. Richards arm-deep in a patient's abdominal cavity completely inverted any of my preconceptions about the delicacy of human bodies. The next day, I could hardly believe that it was possible for Dr. Arthur to slide a patient's pectoral muscles up to their neck—something he only found "kinda cool." Through the enthusiasm of the staff on the trip, I was rewarded with an extremely unique look into surgery, anesthesiology, and nursing. And seeing the patients' conditions before and after proved to me that this field truly has the power to change lives. I gained first-hand insight into the issues that patients face in third world countries, such as healthcare access, insurance premiums, and poorly executed operations.

In addition, I had never conceptualized how much work goes into putting on a mission trip. Seeing the sheer amount of materials in the storeroom and Cheryl's organization of case work and supplies, I realized that 2-3

hours of surgery in the OR requires months of arduous preparation. And through conversing with everyone on our makeshift chairs in the storage area, I also had insightful conversations about the life of medical professionals, medical ethics, and health insurance issues in America. These discussions really made me feel like I now understand exactly what I am getting myself into.

Overall, this trip shattered and recreated my perceptions about global medicine, making me yearn for the day when I can return to make an impact as a physician. And on the side, it was wonderful to experience Rwandan food and culture, and splurge on a bit too many souvenirs. After just six short days, I was shocked that I almost teared up when people started leaving the hospital on Friday afternoon. I know I will always treasure this experience, so thank you to everyone who made it possible!"

TEAM LEADER IMPRESSIONS

■ Mukul Parikh, MD

Operation Medical's first mission to Rwanda was a true pleasure and great experience for the team. The operating room facilities were very well equipped and most of the needed drugs and supplies were easily available. The storage facilities for all the equipment/supplies we brought with us was the best we have encountered in any mission – plenty of room and close to the operation rooms. The local staff was welcoming and cooperative. They were extremely appreciative of the Laparoscopic Camera head we carried from US for their use. Early in the week, we were invited back again for another mission soon and the feeling was mutual among the participants.



Pravallika Sanke, Dr. Mukul Parikh and Isita Tripathy



CASES BY TYPE

Bronchoscopy	Exploratory laparotomy	Hysterectomy, vaginal suspension & sling
Cholecystectomy	Exploratory laparotomy, sigmoid resections, anastomosis; lysis of adhesions, repair of serosal tear	LeForte Culpocolpocliesis
Colonoscopy	Fistulectomy	LeForte Culpocolpocliesis & Peranealoraphy
Colporrhaphy	Fistulotomy	Omentum excision
Contracture release	Hemorrhoidectomy	Rectopexy
Debridement, reconstruction pressure ulcer	Hemorrhoidectomy & EUA	Repair fistula
Debridement, skin graft; circumcision	Hernia repair	Scrotalectomy
Excision mass	Hernia repair, circumcision	Sigmoid colon resection
Excision mass and reconstruction	Hydrocele repair	Sphincteroplasty
Excision mass, right pectoral flap and skin graft	Hydrocele repair, circumcision	Thyroidectomy
Exploratory / Repair	Hysterectomy	Wound repair, skin graft

THE TEAM

Surgeons	Nurses and OR Techs	Ancillary
Kenneth Arthur MD	Karmae Amsbaugh CST	Carrie Delone MD
Bret DeLone MD	Joan Chabot RN	Margaret Marcharterre
Dan Goldman MD	Marybeth Connors RN	Cheryl Peck
Bipinchandra Patel MD	Sara Belucci Lemley CRNP	Elizabeth Richards
Andrew Richards MD	Chelsea Nye RN	Pravallika Sanke
Jeff Segil MD	Bonnie Peffer RN	Brigitte Shelton Cert. A.T
Anesthesia	Monique Rhodes RN	Isita Tripathy
Lindsay Devers CRNA	Jennifer Tran CST	
Carol McAnulty CRNA	Sara Belucci Tribioli RN	
Sue Miller CRNA	Svetlana Zozula RN	
Mukul Parikh MD, Trip Leader		
Neelima Parikh MD		

Special Thanks

Sheila Wibabara for her hard work in coordinating our logistics in Kigali

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*Operation Medical is thankful for all of the participants and welcomes them to join us for another camp
Please check our website at www.operationmedical.com to see you can get involved to provide global healthcare*