

8-18 OCTOBER 2009



MERCY MISSION



Guy's (Paediatric Cardiac)
Surgery Mercy Mission to Sri Lanka
Helping children with heart disease

administrative report



4 NOVEMBER 2009 // JAI LAMEER



This year was hailed the most successful of all missions, having surpassed the 100 mark, with the added challenge of conducting more difficult operations. The team managed 18 operations, one more than the previous year, ending with a final total of 104 operations, with 84 survivors.

Every mission has been more challenging than the preceding one. The host surgeon had managed to clear some of them and reserve difficult cases for the attention of the Guy's team. We stopped for half a day on 13th October 2009, to accommodate the Prime Minister's visit to the hospital followed by a reception held at our hotel, as the PM thought it was an achievement worthy of commendation. Praise to our host surgeon Dr Namal Gamage for carrying out nearly 40% of the country's heart operations on his own (this includes paediatric cases as well), whilst Colombo and Kandy hospitals with larger number of surgeons and nurses had carried out the balance 60%.

On the whole this year was more difficult for me. I had to cope with the planning of the reception, invitations to the Prime Minister, Health Minister, Health Secretary, British High Commissioner, co-ordinating with various security personnel, then having to reschedule everything around the PM's availability. We also produced a souvenir brochure for the event with the help of CADA Design Group and JF&I.



PATIENT 90 // PAWANI ANUTHURA WITH MUM KAMANI // OPERATION 11.10.2009



PATIENT 94 // CHALANI // OPERATION 12.10.2009

18

OPERATIONS COMPLETED
IN MISSION 7

84

TOTAL NUMBER OF
SURVIVORS

104

TOTAL NUMBER OF
OPERATIONS

Prime Minister visits Karapitiya Hospital



THE PRIME MINISTER MEETS THE GUY'S TEAM IN ICU



PRIME MINISTER WITH DR MOHAN JAYATILAKE & PAEDIATRIC NURSE JENNY BUDD CARRYING BABY CHALANI



THEATRE NURSE WITH CHALANI (PATIENT 94) & MUM SRIYANI IN ICU

The Prime Minister arrived sharp on time, after the traditional lighting of the lamp, at the entrance to the Cardio-thoracic Unit, he was shown around the Intensive Care Unit, and the assessment/selection of patients, and the aftercare provided by our team. The PM walked around the unit and was able to carry one of our young patients, the photographs which appeared in the television and most National newspapers. Afterwards he was invited to join the reception at the Lighthouse Hotel. The Governor of the Southern Province Mrs Kumari Balasuriya was kind enough to accept our invitation at short notice and ushered the Prime Minister to the reception.

I thanked the Chief and other distinguished guests. The highlight of the evening was when the young lasses introduced each speaker after giving a brief resume of themselves, and turned out in clockwork precision, speaking in different languages, they were hurriedly trained by Chandrani from the ward, a couple of mothers and me, for three hours the previous evening. It was a great day for us to see the young lasses perform an act of public speaking, these children would not have been around if not for the Guy's Mercy Mission. Again with the traditional lighting of the lamp the speakers were invited to the podium by some of our female patients.

The Prime Minister made his speech and was extremely thankful to the Guy's Team for their continued dedication and commitment to travel to Sri Lanka regularly, and share the knowledge and wide experience of the London team. He expressed his gratitude and behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka and requested us to continue with our missions. He was so excited at the knowledge of a regular visit by a British Team that he expressed his wish to meet us on his next visit to London, which is for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in November.

Some of our Mission 7 patients...

Mr Austin spoke of his joy in conducting these missions and thanked the hosts for the invitations, and commended Jai Lameer as the International Coordinator who took the responsibility of arranging the whole mission. He was glad to share his knowledge and experience and continue the association on a long term basis. Dr Namal Gamage spoke about the advantage Karapitiya Hospital had gained over the years in fostering the association, Dr Senadira (Director of Karapitiya Hospital) made a small speech welcoming the team to Karapitiya Hospital, Galle.

Dr Lahie our first host surgeon from Colombo spoke about the uncertainties we had during our first mission and was glad to see that we have continued with our visits. Whilst Dr Neville Fernando our first co-sponsor pledged his continuing support and stated that the visit by the Guy's Team to Galle was a loss to Colombo. Dr Simpson gave the vote of thanks on behalf of Guy's Mission and Dr Mohan Jayatilake the vote of thanks from the Sri Lankans.

The Prime Minister who was seated next to Mr Austin had queried if he only operated on pretty girls, I gave this information to the parents, one of the fathers reacted and stated "Sir, you took our children who looked miserable and weak, gave them a new lease of life and made them beautiful for us and the World to see, our eternal gratitude for your team for making our lives happy, please convey this message to the Prime Minister." It was a great day in my life to witness the performance of these children and an enjoyable occasion for all.

There were articles in the Sunday Times of 18th October 2009, this had the highest number of viewings, and articles in all other National newspapers praising our services.



PATIENT 87 // PRAVEEN WITH FATHER REJEE // OPERATION 10.10.2009



PATIENT 95 // HANSIKA LAKMAL WITH MUM SRIKANTHI // OPERATION 12.10.2009



PATIENT 103 // KAVISHKA MADHUSHANKA WITH MUM RAMYALATHA // OPERATION 15.10.2009



PATIENT 98 // CHAMINTHU SITHSARA // OPERATION 14.10.2009



The Stars of the Show!



Patient 30 Hafsa with mum, Patient 15 Pushpamala with mum & dad, Patient 62 Ramidu



Female Patient Presenters With Mr Austin & Dr Simpson



Our Presenters - Pushpamala (Patient 15), Shamali Dilrukshi (Patient 39) & Gayani Rashmi (Patient 25)

The Prime Minister Honourable Ratnasiri Wickremanayake, Mr Austin, Dr Gamage, Dr Simpson, Dr Mrs Senadira (Director of Karapitiya Hospital), Dr Lahie (First Host Surgeon), Dr Neville Fernando (First local co-sponsor) and Dr Mohan Jayatilake spoke.

They were introduced by Miss Lakshi de Silva, Miss Anuruddhika Pushpamala, Miss E.W.Thisari, Miss Chamalie Dilrukshi, Miss Divindi Palliakkara, Miss Gayani Ratnaprobodhi, Miss Siluni Fernando and Miss Gayani Rashmi, they were the stars, and the show was theirs.

The event worked to clockwork precision, and the Prime Minister left on time as he was leaving to China that evening. The Prime Minister was rather taken by surprise by our organisation and has expressed his desire to meet us in London when he comes over for the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference in November.

In addition to meeting us, the Prime Minister wished to discuss about raising funds to purchase an Echo-cardiograph for the Cardiac wing of Karapitiya Hospital, the unit we took was on loan from GE, and had to be imported specifically to UK from their factory in Israel, and returned back. The images produced by this machine is so clear, it helps with accurate diagnosis and be a useful item for Dr Gamage. The machine costs \$100,000.00 together with all the probes. Guy's Mercy Mission has offered to start the funds off by donating a quarter, we should also be able to get a special price from the manufacturers, and have the equipment zero rated for tax, there is a group of businessmen in Sri Lanka who will also collect funds for this purpose.

How we got on...

Previously, I only had to purchase some sutures, and an odd item or two, when the stocks which we took with us dwindled, this year I had to attend to purchasing supplies on a daily basis. There was a total lack of consumables in the hospital. I ended up fixing the air conditioning in the operating theatre and purchasing spares for the humidifying equipment installed in the ICU. The surgeon had to operate with a headband to stop the sweat dripping on the patient. We usually take theatre packs and sutures with us and leave the unused items behind for the hospital. I dread what it will be like next year. I understood the 2006 requisition had not reached the hospital. The theatre will be closed for refurbishment from January 2010 for six months. I wonder whether it will be ready when we arrive on our 8th mission, or will we have to tackle the teething problems in case of late completion.

Sorry to note that no alternative has been arranged for heart operations to be carried out. We have an invitation for a longer session for next year. We will have to consider if this is possible, as staff come out utilise their annual leave. If we can persuade Guy's St Thomas' to allow a week on study leave, then we might be able to extend our stay. I am glad three volunteers have emerged to help me out, they are Kamal Sujeewa and wife Kamani - two the perfusionists, and the other Kamal Hussain, the local wealthy antique shop owner ever willing to find sponsors at short notice to look after patients.



MR AUSTIN WITH HEADBAND



KAMAANI, CONNIE, NIGEL, KAMAL & MARAH - PERFUSIONISTS WITH THEATRE NURSES

In between my duties, I was assisting Dr John Simpson with the logging of patient details, so that he can concentrate on the echo cardiography. I noted that the examination times were much longer, this is attributed to the the tougher cases being dealt with. As usual, John had his never ending queues, he must have seen around 150 patients on this mission and over 1500 to date. Because of the reception on 13th the post operative patients were requested to turn up after the 14th, this allowed the team cardiologist to assess and select operative patients early and line them up.

As post operative patients from previous missions were arriving from far and near,

I was able to rent local house for a month although occupation was only for a week. We provided the patients and parents with mats and meals and they were pleased with the arrangements. On previous visits, some who arrived from distant towns were sleeping in the bus stops, and one patient lost out on being operated as he developed a cold, I will try to persevere finding a house on future visits. When the post operative patients from previous missions start arriving, it gives the parents on the current operative lists a boost in confidence, as they start to hear and see the success stories, sadly, out of the 18 operations we lost four, the last patient passing away on the 20th October

with kidney failure. The operations are so severe that some of the tender, weak bodies cannot withstand the impact and lose their will to survive.

When a death occurs these poor parents run around in desperation, looking to borrow money for funeral expenses, we have therefore decided to provide some means tested financial assistance, all four unfortunate families from this year qualified, and were helped out.



PRIME MINISTER WITH DR SIMPSON AND VIVID I ECHOCARDIOGRAPH



PRAVEEN IN ICU WITH PAEDIATRIC NURSE CLARE STENNING

17 years is a long wait...

104



PATIENT 104:

Risvaniya Shabdeen

Among the happier incidences, was the photograph of one child being carried by the PM splashed in all newspapers, thanks to all the media for the publicity, these articles bring another rush of patients scrambling from parts of the country to see us, one of them was Miss Risvaniya Shabdeen (Patient 104) from a camp in Puttlam, one of 8 children, she is 21 now, had heard in one of the news broadcast about our presence in Galle, she rushed all the way with her grand parents and made it on time, she was originally diagnosed with a heart condition when she was 4 years old, the family had absolutely no hope or vision of raising the money, so they consoled themselves to the eventual destiny, she was selected as the last patient.

We provided her with cost for surgical clothing, bed linen, lodging expenditure which was subsequently taken over by some local businessmen to be looked after till she returns home. She is full of gratitude for our team and conveys her blessings.

All television channels and newspapers gave a good coverage, so was a wonderful article in the Sunday Times on Sunday 18th October 2009, and Lakbima on Sunday 25th November 2009.



Help for a war hero's family...

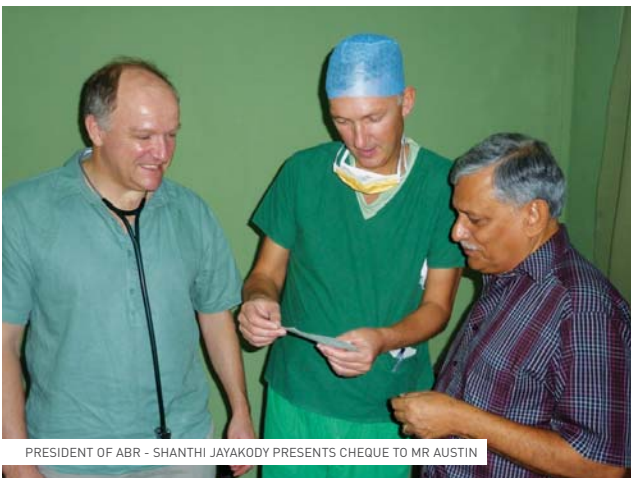
89

PATIENT 89:

Anjana



Then there was the case of 7 year old Anjana (Patient 89), who came out of the theatre with some wires protruding, had to be paced externally and needed a pacemaker to be fitted. This was costly, about Rs 350,000.00 if done in a private hospital in Colombo. I interviewed the father, to ascertain if he was capable of raising the funds, he was an Army Corporal, who had been informed about the additional treatment required - not offered by our team, he came in with a sombre, worried look, after a couple of moments of listening to his life history, he had blown off one of his legs by stepping on a land mine and now been fitted with an artificial leg and rehabilitated to carry out light duties. His looks said it all, I had a word across the floor with Dr Simpson who gave me the nod, we decided to pay for the pacemaker, as there was no point doing things in half measures.



PRESIDENT OF ABR - SHANTHI JAYAKODY PRESENTS CHEQUE TO MR AUSTIN

A few moments later our visitors arrived, they had been with us at the reception the previous evening, and stayed overnight. They were officials from the Association of British Residents in Sri Lanka. Val & Shanthi Jayakody, Sue Harrison, Anne Town having given a 'guided tour', and informed about Anjana's case, they were glad to sponsor the costs, cheques for the sum of Rs 325,000.00 from ABR and Rs 250,000.00 from Anne Town were presented to us and accepted by Mr Austin & Dr Simpson.

The pacemaker was imported specially thanks to Carlyle de Zilva from Ceegeez, and Cardiophysist Dr Duminda Samarasinghe at LRH for an early implant. The child returned home safely on 14th November 2009. Thanks to ABR who were having a fund raising ball on 7th November 2009.



Thank You!

Finally, I thank all the sponsors and friends of the mission, specially Karapitiya Hospital & staff, GE, Sri Lankan Cares, CADA Design Group, Sri Lankan Airlines, Jetwing Lighthouse Hotel, JF&I Printers, Dialog Telekom, Mount Lavinia Hotel, Sampath Bank, Hemas Hospitals and various suppliers. Namal & Mohan for putting up with my continuous badgering, and the members of the team who made this mission a great success.

I will follow on with the Financial Report, the Medical Report will be completed by Mr Austin & Dr Simpson.



We need your help...

The Guy's Mercy Mission to Sri Lanka has made a commitment to take the hope of a chance to live to children suffering from congenital heart disease in Sri Lanka.

Mission 7 saw the Guy's Team give the 100th child the chance of life. A record 18 children were successfully operated on. A few moments of your time could make the difference of lifetime to a child. Imagine the direct effect your donation could have on a child and its family.

In order to make our continuing Mercy Missions possible and fulfil the promise, we are in need of your help and support.

Send a cheque made payable to 'Guys Mercy Mission to Sri Lanka' to

David Anderson at CADA Design Group

(Suite 4, 9 Bell Yard Mews, London SE1 3UY) or to

Jai Lameer (66 Smitham Downs Road, Purley, Surrey CR8 4NF)

or log on to www.mercymission.co.uk
and use the secure payment donation link

Many thanks for your support and donation.

Guy's (Paediatric Cardiac)
Surgery Mercy Mission to Sri Lanka
Helping children with heart disease



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