

Dr. Andrew Greer's Travel Diary



Introduction

I have visited Uganda 5 times and always anticipated spending longer working in the medical centre. It was always an ambition to share the vision of the dedicated staff here in order to develop healthcare services further. I therefore opted to take time from work in the UK and spend four and a half months out here. Previous visits have been much shorter: usually 1 or 2 weeks. I've always wanted to get my teeth stuck into many challenges here and a longer spell will hopefully achieve this.

Prior to moving to Uganda, I worked in Emergency Medicine in Scotland and am due to start specialty training in August this year when I return. Rather than a blog this is more of an update of the developments that occur in the clinic during my time here.

Living Water Medical Centre

The clinic is an absolutely tremendous unit, largely as a result of the committed staff, most of whom have been here since it opened in 2006. The facilities have expanded exponentially since opening and we currently offer the following services:

- Consultations with clinical officers
- Laboratory services
- Competitively priced and well stocked dispensary, where those who cannot afford medicines receive them free of charge.
- Antenatal services
- 4 inpatient rooms, largely catering for severely unwell patients suffering from malaria.

On arrival I met with each of the 13 staff and established several objectives to be achieved during the visit. Priorities were centered on improving medical practice, developing services offered, and refurbishing parts of the clinic that required modification.

Refurbishment

The clinic was built and opened in 2006. It has had various expansions since, including further inpatient rooms, a maternity unit, and laboratory. All rooms are cleaner and newer than most other local services, including the government hospital.

Despite this refurbishment was needed to keep up this standard. I soon became a dab hand at plastering and painting with the huge help of Fred, our local painter and decorator. I was also met by a team of volunteers from Scotland during the initial phase, so a huge thanks to Alec and Michael for getting the ball rolling!



Phase 1 is now complete and the waiting area, reception, consultation room are finished.

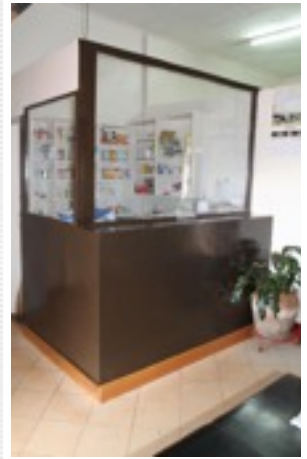
Reporting

On average 200-300 patients per month visit the clinic. Requests include consultations, laboratory tests, prescription of medicines, or a combination of the above. Reporting of disease patterns is limited, as well as medication usage and investigations carried out.

We have now developed a simple reporting system whereby the disease demographic is documented on a daily basis for review at the end of the month. Furthermore, we now record all laboratory tests and usage of all medicines and equipment.

This will be a huge benefit when seeking donations from the UK, in relation to prioritising appropriate medicines and supplies. It is also crucial for the purpose of audit and clinical governance to have accurate reporting and data analysis.

“The clinic is an absolutely tremendous unit, largely as a result of the committed staff, most of whom have been here since it opened in 2006.”



Education

There is a great need for continual medical education in every healthcare environment. The staff at Living Water were keen to improve educational resources in order to maximise patient care. Oxford Handbook Publishers are internationally recognised for their medical texts and kindly donated £300 worth of books for the clinic.

We are also aiming to initiate fortnightly meetings centred on clinical topics and continual medical education.

Summary

There is still so much to do out here and various activities are in the pipeline for the forthcoming months. A minor surgery camp will take place, we will have a visiting dentist from Scotland volunteering, there is planned HIV screening of orphans at the local children's centre, and we hope to gain accreditation to treat HIV patients.

“The staff at Living Water were keen to improve educational resources in order to maximise patient care.”

