

Ethiopia Link

Hossana and Yirga Alem
- our link hospitals in Ethiopia
September 2010 Newsletter

More details on BCUHB homepage

Update on the Water and Sewage project

Regular readers will be aware that the main project for our link with Hossana is to help them with their water and sewage problems. The hospital wards and theatre have no running water or sanitation. **We need to build a four storey water tower, with pumps and plumbing, and replace broken sewage pipes.** Estimated costs: around £40,000.

Good news is that there has continued to be a steady gathering of funds for the project - both from the many supporters within Central area of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, and also by others outside who have heard about the project and offered support.

More good news is that the Zonal Administrator for Hossana, Ato Melese, has promised to contribute 15% of the costs. With this, we estimate we have reached over 80% of our total target.

A big consideration is getting really good project management to ensure that funds are spent wisely and effectively on the work. We have asked the Zonal administrator to help with this, perhaps using our friends in WaterAid Ethiopia.

So we have taken a deep breath and given the go-ahead to Hossana to start the process of inviting tenders for the work - in the firm expectation that we shall have the full funds in time! Scary stuff.....

Learn more about the water project on the Ethiopia Link homepage

“Crazy mad” cyclists join Team Betsi for Oct. 17th Cardiff half marathon!

Two junior doctors from Glan Clwyd hospital are planning to cycle down to Cardiff, run the Cardiff half marathon, and then cycle back up to North Wales again. They will be joining **Team Betsi** - a mixed bag of regular and occasional runners assembled purely for this event - for the half marathon.

And why? To help raise the final funds for the water and sewage project in Hossana. So when you are approached with a sponsorship form, or invited to donate - try to imagine working in a hospital with no water on the wards...!

Visit www.justgiving.com/ethiopiaLink

C'mon you runners...!!



Team Betsi

Hyena attacks

- no laughing matter

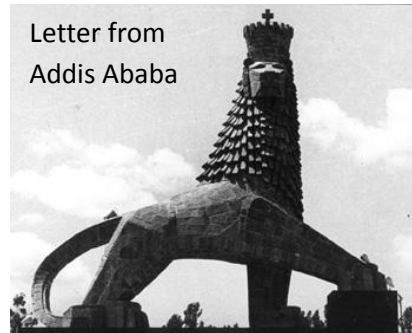
Dr Million, medical director and surgeon at Hossana tells us that the town has been plagued by hyena attacks in recent months. These scavengers venture out onto the streets of the town after dark, and have attacked people, three of whom sustained very serious scalp injuries. Quite why they go for the scalp is not clear to him - each case has required complex repair, with grafting.



As a result, the townspeople organised a hunt three weeks ago, managing to kill an extraordinary 150 hyenas within the town and immediate surroundings.

BCUHB staff visiting Yirga Alem hospital in 2008 recall seeing a child with very extensive injuries from hyena mauling - an anguishing sight.

Letter from
Addis Ababa



Arrogant, pesky, & thankless consultants...

Dr Zeleke, former medical director in Hossana, visited Glan Clwyd in 2008, and currently works in O&G in Addis Ababa. He will be returning to Hossana, and writes with warmest wishes:

“Hi everyone, you know I very much like your devotion and commitment to have some change in Hossana. I know am being far away from the infos that I would have adhered to, but that will never be easy for me ‘cause ob-gyn here is damn busy dept, 30-40 patients are assigned to a resident, case presentation once a fortnight, management session thrice a year, journal club twice a year, a very hectic restless sleepless duty and also some arrogant, pesky, thankless and trustless consultants.

*Am living outside the hospital, in a condominium paying 1000birr a month, half my salary- but life is relatively luxurious, blessed be God. My hospital in Addis is moving for a reform, I wish BPR (business process reengineering) will commence soon, although great preparation should be made before the implementation, it’s quite a big hospital. Please please pass my warm greetings for all who visited Ethiopia or who I met in Wales and know me incidentally or accidentally---and the gynaecologists especially.. **Ciao!! - Zeleke Sahelu.”***



If you want to support Ethiopia Link, why not sign up to Pennies from Heaven and donate the pennies from the end of your payslip? - see our intranet pages for details



Dr Getachew Iyasu, pictured above, was the general surgeon and medical director in Hossana until 2007. He writes:

“When I first went to Hossana hospital as a newly graduating general surgeon from Addis Ababa, I was not fully aware of the magnitude of the challenges I am going to embark on. At a glance the four story hospital looks old but ok externally. I then learnt that the major operating room is on the 2nd floor, but despite all the installed kit, has never been utilized due to non-functioning elevator. The minor OR, on the ground floor with its two operating tables is used for both minor and major surgeries. Due to a defect in the water supply and septic system, there is no tap water, bath or toilets for patients”

“Hossana hospital serves for more than a



million people with its meagre resources and a handful of doctors. The top three common surgical diseases are goitre, hernia and prostate problems. On emergency, the commonest cases are intestinal obstruction (volvulus), trauma and appendicitis. On average I did six major, ten minor and seven emergency procedures every week. Though being the only surgeon put me on a lot of pressure, it had been a great experience and an honour to serve the community who badly needed the service.”

“I will never forget my first ever elective surgical patient. It was subtotal thyroidectomy for multinodular goiter, a common disease in the area. Even though I did supervised thyroidectomies as part of my training, this one was different. First I am alone by myself and moreover there is no blood bank service. The other is my patient is male. It was

difficult for me to mobilize the lobes, which could be due to strong neck musculature or my inexperience or both. However with little longer time and moderate bleeding the operation was successful and patient discharged without complications. But it left me with a big question. What if he bled significantly? It would have been a disaster. From then on I started to arrange at least one unit of blood from compatible relatives and store it in a regular refrigerator”

“The other case I won’t forget is an emergency procedure. The patient was in his late 60’s with acute abdomen. He was in shock at presentation. I quickly resuscitated

and rushed him for urgent laparotomy.

What I found was first time for me and generally rare



to occur. It was gangrenous volvulus of the ascending colon up to mid transverse colon. I did right hemicolectomy and ileo-transverse anastomosis. Two days later I found my patient smiling and well recovering. It was a joy for me and his life for the patient. What he got besides the resection and anastomosis was a full peritoneal lavage and our ‘potent’ antibiotics (ampicillin, gentamycin and chloramphenicol). It seems silly if you see it from west but it is the daily fact in Hosanna and others alike.”

“I believe the link between Hosanna and Glan Clwyd hospitals has done a lot since then and improved the services of the hospital much better than when I was there. I know it demands dedication, tolerance and compassion to help people who are in need. Even though there are administrative and technical challenges and obstacles to work more closely, I would like to encourage and invite the whole Glan Clwyd community to be part of this novel idea of helping the needy.”

Getachew Iyasu August 2010
(Getachew visited Glan Clwyd in 2007 and sends his greetings)

(Ed – largely for dietary reasons, **volvulus** is a very common problem there – especially in the priests that eat only certain pulses and grains)

A wild ride round Northern Scotland..



In an epic trip, Claire and Jonathan Morton and Ann Sephton undertook a 450 mile cycling marathon round the North West coast of Scotland this summer, raising funds for the water project at Hosanna Hospital. Ann was unable to complete her ride due to a bad fall from her bike, but we are pleased to hear she is making a good recovery. Well done that trio, and thanks to all those that sponsored them!



And the future?

The next trip to Hossana and Yirga Alem hospitals is planned for early in the New Year – we hope to take a team to help with the teaching of the many health officers in emergency obstetrics, paediatrics and surgery. It may also be possible to give some training in basic ultrasound. We hope to see the beginnings of building of the water tower on our visit.

And we will take the diathermy machine back again...this machine has already been out and back, having not worked out there. This time, it works and it stays!

Follow events in Ethiopia Link or contact us on the link page via BCUHB homepage – or on



Next meeting: Thursday 21st
October 2010, 5pm,
Education Centre YGC
all warmly welcome