

Yotkom Newsletter - April 2023

This month we have enjoyed having special visitors from Australia. Dr Jono Tey (General Practitioner) and Dr Ben Auld (Paediatric Cardiologist)

Jono has spent some of his time helping finalise the latest edition of the Yotkom Clinical Guidelines Book. This has been printed and is also available as a PDF document on every hospital work station and for all our clinicians to download as a ready reference on their phones. The guidelines are developed from various sources and designed to be relevant to doctors and nurses working in this very low income African setting.

This is part of the wider vision of Yotkom to be a centre of excellence delivering quality evidence based medicine to the community.



Building relationships, listening to stories and understanding the challenges experienced by our Ugandan workers is a priority and we are thankful that Jono fully embraced the opportunity to speak to every one of the 85 employees at Yotkom and to record their photos for Australian supporters and partners.

The timing of Ben's visit was amazing and unexpected in that it coincided with the launch of a significant Rheumatic Heart Disease research project across the entire Kitgum district (ADUNU). This project directed by the Uganda Heart Institute seeks to identify and treat children early and prevent long term irreversible heart damage. There were many community, government and health representatives at this meeting and Ben made some very valuable connections which will help Yotkom.



Ben examined and performed echo cardiograms on many children as part of a free series of clinics undertaken over two weeks at Yotkom.



Left: Dr Ben with our Ultrasonographer, Samuel and Emmanuel (nurse) teaching the art of echocardiography.



Both doctors participated in our Yotkom weekly FM radio community health broadcast called TEMBO DOCTOR. They fielded some health questions from the community especially those related to heart diseases.

The Australian team also had a key role to play in mentoring and encouraging some of our scholarship holders like Daisy (radiography) Isaac (Physiotherapy) and Denis and Richard (recent medical student graduates). We thank you for all the donors who have generously donated to ensure Yotkom will have a bright future of medical graduates who will return to Kitgum to serve their community.



Left: Denis, Daniel and Richard (left to right) are 3 of the latest Intern Doctors graduating from Gulu University. Denis and Richard were both Yotkom Sponsored Medical students.

Right: Daisy (studying Radiology), Isaac (studying physiotherapy) are both Yotkom sponsored students with Dr Ben and Dr Jono in Kampala.

Below: It was encouraging to observe Collins, our Anaesthetist work tirelessly with the surgical team providing anaesthesia to theatre lists often exceeding 6 patients per day. Collins was previously a nurse at Yotkom and recently completed his Anaesthetics training as a Yotkom sponsored student.



Overall, everyone here is very thankful to both Australian doctors for the contribution they made to our mission and vision in Northern Uganda over the past 2 weeks.

Thanks to donor support, before the end of this month we plan to install the digital Xray conversion machine into our radiology department which will be a great advance. We have also ordered the necessary medical equipment required to set up a Yotkom Microbiology Laboratory. This will provide very valuable information on the infections we encounter here and how we can more effectively treat them.

Yotkom is planning to be more involved in medical research and to this end we have been interacting with the Uganda Heart Institute and the Department of Medicine at a nearby teaching hospital in Gulu. (photo of Professor of Medicine at Gulu with Dr Charles and Andrew from Yotkom).

The Yotkom hospital has grown in patient numbers being seen and in services being provided so we see a need for a more comprehensive computer records system which will link all the departments and especially allow us to better track all the pharmacy supplies and consumables we use. It will also help us keep better medical records and be able to have reliable data on diseases for research purposes. We are looking at a locally developed software program called CLINIC MASTER and we had a visit from them last week and were impressed with the product. It is used at several private hospitals in Uganda and is very user friendly for our African team.

There is a one up set and training cost of \$10,000 AUS



The upgrade makes sense because the ongoing annual fees for IT support and maintenance (approx. \$2000) will be less than what we are currently paying for the Australian medical record program BEST PRACTICE and yet CLINIC MASTER provides many other data bases for Laboratory , Pharmacy, Radiology , In patients, Maternity etc. which all link together and is also very user friendly in the African setting.

Any donations toward this purpose (designated “CM”) will be most appreciated.

Thank you once again to all our valued partners and supporters. You are helping us grow and achieve our mission and vision:

“Partnering together to improve access and excellence in health care to Northern Uganda”
“Building relationships, resources and self reliance”

Kind regards,

Dr Andrew Wright
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