

A WORKING VISIT WITH A DIFFERENCE

By Simon Derby

Vice President, Motec Life – UK. April 2008

On the 24/04/08 I joined a Motec Team of six led by Dr Paul Ofori Atta at Nkawkaw, Holy Family Hospital. As usual normal routine familiarisation tour of the hospital from the Theatre through to the Nurses Training College was conducted.

The Team immediately went into clinical duties the next day where minor surgery e.g. caudal blocks and excision of biopsy of tumours were done. At 15.00 Mrs Felicity Adu- Mills gave a lecture on Wound dressing at the Nurses Training College. There was a very good attendance of staff.



On the 16/04/08 Dr Paul Ofori Atta did a morning ward round accompanied by the team and resident doctor who presented challenging orthopaedic conditions - potential surgical candidates. One obvious observation made was that most of the local people shunned limb and life saving amputation.

Simon Derby gave a lecture on Post Op Care under the Theme Leadership and Team Work at the NTC later in the day (at 15.00). The session was well attended by student nurses, College tutors, hospital Staff including the pharmacy staff.



Why the visit was special and symbolic this time

A three member delegation travelled from Nkawkaw to the Centenary House which hosts the National Catholic Secretariat in Accra. The team assisted with the distribution of medical donations from a container that was shipped from the UK by Motec in February. Stephen Townsend, David Lewis and myself undertook the exercise.



Among other things Motec donated 9 special hospital beds, and 8 mattresses, Laboratory sample fridge, theatre recovery trolleys, hundreds of re-useable theatre drapes, anaesthetic equipment including Laryngeal Masks and thousands of surgical gloves. Blankets were also donated to the National Catholic Secretariat (NCS) towards disaster relief.

It is the hope of Motec to persevere with her objective of upgrading the skills of the local work force through education, practical work, collaborative programmes and the supply of essential medical equipment for improved patient care.



The target hospitals that benefited from the medical supplies were; Holy Family Hospital, Nkawkaw. St Michael's Hospital, Pramso. St. Joseph's Hospital, Koforidua. And VRA Hospital, Akosombo.



Holy Family Hospital, Nkawkaw

Motec was delighted to see the fruits of the collaboration between Motec and the hospital. Recommendations made following discussions with the Medical/Nursing Staff, Administration and the Holy Spirit Sister during our previous working visits in October 2007 have been considered carefully and appropriate measures implemented. We saw improvement in the anaesthetic delivery through improved equipment, service of anaesthetic machines, and availability of ventilators. The recovery set-up is also improved with staff understanding the concept of the immediate post-op care of surgical patients from theatre in the recovery room.



Primary Care; (Opportunities and Challenges)

For the first time Motec was involved in the opportunities and challenges in the primary health care delivery in our rural communities. Mrs Felicity Adu-Mills participated in the rural health care programme of education, immunisation, HIV/AIDS care, health screening and basic health care in the villages around Nkawkaw.



Primary Health is becoming high on the Ghana health care policy agenda and community Nurses are seen as instrumental in helping to reduce inequalities in health, promote social inclusion and improve people's lifestyles and circumstances. Government policies emphasises the partnerships between agencies and communities, and reduce work with individuals to improve health and reduce health inequalities.



Observations - Community Development Strategy in Ghana

A process that stresses working with people as they define their own goals, mobilise resources and develop action plans for addressing problems they have collectively defined (Minskler) is being promoted as an appropriate approach to addressing these issues.

The approach contrast with that of the traditional primary health care team, which is based on working with individuals and families, but it is tune with the principles of health visiting which involves searching for and stimulating an awareness of needs, influencing health policies, and promoting health-enhancing activities. Holy Family Hospital, Nkawkaw has made concerted effort to improve health care both within the hospital setting and out reach programmes. We are also amazed and impressed by the concerted efforts the Ministry of Health (Ghana) is working in bringing better health to the people at their doorsteps in the rural community.

St. Michael's Hospital, Pramso

Motec so far run educational programmes at this hospital. Pramso hospital is a typical example of a hospital that needs a lot of help to support her efforts to deliver better health care. On Motec, s maiden's visit it was observed that resources were very limited. The hospital Administrator indeed recognised this and is engaged in a positive collaboration with Motec. Aimed at influencing things, Motec sent out a delegation (Simon Derby) in April 2007 on a facts finding mission to assess and identify the needs of the hospital.

Materials including a patient trolley mattress was donated by Motec in October were put to good use. Again Motec has donated a theatre mechanical operating table, patient trolley, laboratory sample incubator, hundreds of theatre drapes, anaesthetic equipment, thousand of surgical gloves, etc, etc, to assist in the drive to achieving quality health care delivery to the people in the region.



Motec's vision is to help improve the hospital Laundry Services at St. Michael's which at present remains poor. To improve the laundry services especially during the raining season, Motec hopes to solicit funds to purchase a washing machine for the hospital laundry. We are hopeful to achieve this target in the immediate future.

Conclusion

Motec has made giant strides since the maiden working visit to Ghana in October 2006. Our collaboration with target hospitals has unveiled the challenges of charitable medical work in Africa and the joys in helping humanity. Where changes are necessary, we have learnt a lot from our target hospitals and vice-versa. For example, we have seen most of our target hospitals like Nkawkaw Holy Family Hospital improve basic the facilities and practices aimed at improving patient care progressing steadily with a sense of purpose. We hope to persevere with our sole objective of supporting improvements in patient care through education, transfer of skills, exemplary working practices and others. May our collaborations live long and bring better health care to many.

Taaba Nariba (thank you)!