

## GHANA TRIP

I travelled to Ghana February 3-17 for the Vargas Award. The team for the trip included Dr. Don Lalonde and Dr. Scott Kozin for the first week. Cynthia Cooper OT joined me for the entire time.

We worked at KATH – Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi. Kumasi is the second largest city in Ghana at approximately 2.5 million people and is the capital of the Ashanti region.

The hospital is the largest in the region and is set on a sprawling campus. There are many health care professional students – medical, nursing and allied health.

The first week I attended ortho, plastics and trauma rounds. Dr. Lalonde and Dr. Kozin gave presentations every day. The first day we conducted rounds on some of the inpatient units and had a clinic with an objective to choose appropriate surgical candidates. I was able to meet and work closely with the surgeons. There were some patients that were not surgical candidates but therapy only candidates that we were able to initiate treatment right away. Later in the week we all attended plastics/hand clinic with the local surgeons and therapist.

Dr. Lalonde set up a wide awake surgery room and I was able to observe surgery one day.

The other days were spent in the hand therapy area of the physiotherapy building. We worked alongside the local therapist co-treating. We were able to do hands on teaching and guiding of treatment planning. There were many serious and complex injuries that are being managed with minimal resources and therapists with only a few years of experience.

I gave two education sessions to the entire physiotherapy department. For these sessions the topics were more broad in scope in order for everyone to benefit. The topics I presented were “Management of Stiff Joints” and “Pain and your Brain” These were well attended.

When I returned home I created an orientation package for Kumasi for future travelling health professionals. I have also worked with HVO (Health Volunteers Overseas) and have now become the project lead for hand therapy for the KATH project.

I recently returned to this site November 6-17 on my own. I worked in the therapy department co-treating and also attended surgery in the wide awake room and plastics clinic with the surgeons. I have been working on re writing the learning objectives for the site. I have also attempted to make some progress towards the therapy department having access to supplies such as plaster casting material.

I hope to continue my involvement with this project and continue to improve the knowledge of our Ghanaian colleagues and the treatment of the patients.

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