



Mulanje Mission Hospital

Newsletter

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Mulanje Mission Hospital

CCAP Blantyre Synod

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Editorial Comment

Pearson Soka

Welcome to the second edition of Mulanje Mission Hospital 2016 newsletter.

The hospital is still busy despite the malaria season being over. Among the new services being offered are hypertension and diabetes clinics. Palliative care services continue to draw more clients as Mulanje Mission Hospital moves towards becoming a centre of excellence.

The Malawi government through the Ministry of Health has signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM). In the new agreement there are more services that CHAM hospitals are expected to deliver. This means that the patient turnover may increase which will require more resources in terms of personnel and medical supplies. We will soon have some staff coming back from studies after completion of their training programs.

We applaud all our partners for the continued support that has propelled the hospital to provide quality services to the community in our catchment area and beyond. We appeal to potential partners to assist through the bed sponsorship program or through one off donations so that the hospital can continue to provide quality services to the community during these challenging times in Malawi.

Thank you for your continued support.

Pearson

ISABEL: Improved Services for AIDS and Basic healthcare through Empowerment and Local democracy

Sheilla Mangwiyo

Improved Services for AIDS and Basic healthcare through Empowerment and Local democracy (ISABEL), is a program that is expected to advocate for more efficient use of resources in hospitals, improve transparency and accountability in the health system, influence decision making processes and prioritisation, enhancing public awareness of the health budget and empowering Health Facility Advisory Committees to be involved in the national budget formulation process.

The program is being implemented in three regions of Malawi. In the northern part, it is being implemented by LISAP, in the central region the project is being implemented by Nkhoma Mission Hospital while in the southern part of Malawi it is Mulanje Mission Hospital that is running the project.

Mulanje Mission Hospital will run the project for three years in its three T/As, T/A Mabuka, T/A Chikumbu and T/A Nkanda.

In February 2016, MMH together with MHEN conducted stakeholder meeting at district level as well as at T/A level. District stakeholder meetings included 60 District Executive Committee members as participants. Meetings at T/A level had 30 participants. The two meetings highlighted the main goals of the project and expected results.

ISABEL is going to work with the existing structures: Village Health Committees, Health Centre Advisory Committees, Hospital Advisory Committees and District Teams.

Upon being introduced to this new project, participants worried about how they will perform their roles and felt that they would not be heard by authorities as they are just local members.

ISABEL project assures members that they will be trained to take up their roles and responsibilities so they will be respected when they begin their duties.

Dairy Project at Nutrition Rehabilitation Unit

On 26th May 2016 the Nutrition Rehabilitation Unit added a dairy cow to its activities. With support from Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, the unit procured one female cow, primarily as a demonstration project for our community agriculture education programme. However, we have already found that the demand for NRU milk is very high!

This activity will boost the food security programme in many ways, and provides a source of manure to the demonstration plot so that vegetables in the garden will perform well.

The Nutrition Rehabilitation Unit has a Friesian cow, and milking started after

seven days. The livestock is kept in a kraal as part of security and a milking parlor has been constructed. Milking is done twice every day in the morning and late afternoon. Currently, we are getting 5 liters of milk per day, but after the cow has settled, we expect 20 liters a



MMH Dairy Board !

Felix Mkwate

day with proper feeding.

Major customers are the hospital staff and the general public.

The milk will also be given free of charge to children with malnutrition and lactating mothers admitted to our unit, as one way of improving their health status.

We thank all our development partners especially Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, Virginia, USA for their support on food security activities, and as the Mission Hospital we thank God for all these developments.

Radio programme inspires patients

Tikondwe Katumbi and Annie Kaseka

In a bid to reach out to more patients with palliative care community awareness, Mulanje Mission engaged the services of a community radio station known as Mzati on 104.9 fm. The idea of mass communication through radio came after many years of attempts to raise community awareness through churches and community meetings. We realized that not all the people we need to reach come to these forums. For example, some palliative care patients have difficulties in walking, so they cannot go to church or community meetings but they can listen to a radio program while on their sick bed. The radio station covers several districts: Mulanje, Blantyre, Thyolo, Chiradzulu, Chikwawa, Zomba and Balaka. Through the help of UKAID and EMMS international, MMH went on air

with the Health Programme in March 2016. Since then we have produced about 13 programs. Some of the topics shared with listeners were introductions to Palliative Care, Diabetes, types of cancers etc. The programme is broadcasted live on Mondays and repeated on Thursdays. Since the programme started the response has been overwhelming with



Annie Kaseka, Thomas Misenje and Ethhel Misomali recording programme ▲

numerous questions from listeners. People were interested to know signs of different types of cancers, some wanted to know the relationship between voluntary male circumcision and cervical cancer and also criteria to be considered for admission to the palliative care program just to mention a few. We believe this information will help palliative care patients, their guardians and the general public to go to palliative care services near them. This will minimize costs they incur when seeking medical aid for their problems at traditional healers, thus contributing to poverty reduction in their home and country. Mzati radio producer Rachel Josua was all smiles because the positive feedback from listeners means that Mzati has now become the local radio station of choice.

Primary school children dance to Trutex clean water

Good Little Company....Trutex.... was a song sung by children, teachers and parents at Misanjo to show the relationship of these UK based companies with their good work at Misanjo school.

After staying for more than 2 years without water, Misanjo Primary School were all smiles after receiving a borehole water pump from Trutex.

Misanjo Full Primary School is a typical poor local school in Mulanje Mission Hospital catchment area about 10km away. It has a roll of 1443 children.

The school had been enjoying water from a manual borehole pump for a long time. The manual pump, an Afridev pump, is a pump of choice in African rural communities because it is easy to use and maintain. The pumps spare parts are readily available in local markets. The school was unfortunate because a solar pump replaced this user-

friendly pump, but local people were not trained to fix it, and whenever there was a breakdown, the school had to call people as far as 400 km away. This would take weeks or months and the recent breakdown of the pump took more than 2 years, so children were denied their right to clean water for all this time until Trutex came in to assist the school.

Mulanje Mission Hospital and District Education office were worried about the situation at the school, particularly in the rainy season because cholera was in the next district. We were afraid that we could lose our children to this deadly disease. Other groups or people who were concerned about Misanjo's scenario apart from pupils themselves were the Member of Parliament for the area, Ward Councillor, Parents and Teachers Association and Chiefs.

Tikondwe Katumbi

No wonder when Trutex, accompanied by another of our development partners Good Little Company, came to open the new user-friendly Afridev pump, it was all joy, ululation and dancing by community and stakeholders. Speeches were filled with nothing but praises to the company for their timely and precious donation.

As Mulanje Mission we say thank you Trutex you are a true partner.



The opening of Misanjo pump

Ongoing Battle against Cervical Cancer

Phamoli Lekoetje



Dr Ben Jacka and Phamoli Lekoetje

In African society, motherhood is one of the commonest goals for the majority of women. Unfortunately, many of these women face the reality of the burden of Malawi having the highest cervical cancer prevalence in the world on top of overwhelming poverty and HIV/AIDS. Rural communities often suffer most as these patients are bound to seek treatment in low resource settings. Moreover, many have to travel many kilometres for basic health services. So we extend our gratitude to Dr Sue Makin for acquiring a new cold-coagulator for MMH using funding from donors in Virginia, USA. With this machine, MMH continues to battle against cervical cancer through integrated family planning services.

The cold coagulator requires no consumables, is simple to operate, and takes less than a quarter of the time of the cryotherapy machine, making it an ideal solution for our setting. Additionally, it provides a one-stop service with treatment immediately following screening, so patients found with precancerous lesions avoid the financial burdens incurred by multiple appointments, referrals and travel to other health facilities.

Since screening started at MMH, hundreds of women have been screened and treated for precancerous lesions, previously with cryotherapy but now with the cold coagulator. Day in and day out, the dedicated nursing and clinical staff provide this care not only to the local community but also to travellers from across the border free of charge.

Text messaging for Health

We have embarked on a journey into the world of using text-messages (SMS) to communicate with the 74 communities within MMH catchment area of Mulanje District. The rapid expansion of mobile phone technologies worldwide and in particular in sub-Saharan Africa have brought opportunities for engaging and communicating with otherwise isolated communities with great potential benefits for health. Our use of this technology will distribute personalised and general health messages to remind patients of general health information, to take their medications regularly, and for follow up of inpatients, patients with chronic diseases those attending antenatal



*Mwachumu and Salamvba Team
after workshop*

clinics. We hope that future expansion of this program may include the provision of emergency obstetric advice and referral services for pregnant women.

Good evidence supports text messaging for improving medication adherence, returning

Ben Jacka, Medical Officer

for medical appointments and in some circumstances, for health education. An implementation model based on community involvement in all phases is also supported by published peer-reviewed evidence.

Earlier this year, we visited two organisations in Malawi who have implemented similar projects, and conducted a local community engagement workshop. The findings from these have given MMH a head-start into implementing a successful pilot with Salamba and Mwachumu villages. We hope that our partner negotiations with one of the large mobile phone companies in Malawi will be concluded soon so we can turn on the service in these pilot villages.

News from the Youth Centre

Wise Ndawa

Mulanje Mission youth center has been providing youth friendly health services for six years now. Our vision is to have services that empower young people to identify and seek health education and care. Youth friendly health services are high quality services that are relevant, accessible, attractive, affordable, appropriate and acceptable to young people. To attract young people we have facilities such as a coin pool table, open to all young people in the catchment area.

In trying to improve access to services for local young people, two nurses and one clinician were trained through a partnership project between Mulanje Mission Hospital and Plan international. The goal of the project is to improve sexual and reproductive health practice for female and male adolescents through promoting adolescent sexual reproductive health rights and improve access to services for adolescents with and without disability. The partnership has come at the right time when we are experiencing a lot of teenage pregnancy, early marriages, sexual abuse, forced marriages and discrimination against adolescents with disability. The target of the project is to reach out to 500,000 young people by 2018 in Mulanje district. So far 50 young people have been trained as community facilitators to assist in reaching out to adolescents with and without disability. As much as we appreciate the coming of the project we feel the most important contributing factor is unemployment. Mulanje Mission is continuing to lobby for the introduction of vocational skills training and to start sending young people to vocational training centres to instill a spirit of independence for a better tomorrow.



Fight against Non-Communicable Diseases at MMH

Tabu Gonani

For many years now, the burden of HIV / AIDS and tuberculosis has been very significant. Efforts have been made to bring these diseases under control and a lot of progress has been made as evidenced by reduced deaths. Until recently more attention has been given to these diseases while other significant diseases have received less attention. We know, however, that the global burden of disease is shifting from infectious to non-communicable diseases

A survey conducted locally suggested that NCDs and their risk factors are a public health problem in Malawi. Lessening risk factors and strengthening early detection and timely treatment were some of the recommendations from this survey. Malawi government has joined the fight by adopting the global action plan for the prevention and control of NCDs by 2025. Mulanje Mission Hospital joined the battle against NCDs in 2012. So far the hospital is running a hypertension and diabetes clinic and hopes to expand to add asthma and epilepsy clinics in the near future.

Mulanje Mission started by training 4 nurses and 2 clinicians to run the clinic and support care of patients in the wards. At the start of the program, the clinic had 20 patients enrolled. The frequency of appointments depends on severity of the disease. Once patients' blood pressure or blood sugar is within acceptable ranges, patients' come less often. The clinic has been successful over the years with patient enrolment now at 290 from the initial 20 patients with at least 8 new patients per week. This has happened due to successful screening of patients in out patients department as well as wards. This is in line with global target number 8 which aims at ensuring that at least 50% of eligible people receive drug therapy and counselling (including glycaemic control) to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

At the beginning of the program, most patients were from our catchment area but now the clinic provides care for patients coming from all over Mulanje, Thyolo, Phalombe, and Mozambique.

In terms of capacity building, 12 more nurses and 4 clinicians have been trained in management of hypertension and diabetes. Hospital management ensures that nurses and clinicians to run the clinic are available and that drugs and supplies needed for smooth running of the clinic are available.

However, there are a few challenges that the hospital is facing in running the clinic. The space that was identified for the clinic in 2012 when it had 20 patients is the same that is being used now. This results in congestion.

Since MMH is a paying hospital, some patients fail to pay for drugs and at times this leads to lack of drug compliance. We hope to be able to provide insulin free to our patients in the coming year.

My appreciation to Mary Chipole, lead nurse for the clinic, Dr Isobel and the entire team of nurses and clinicians who work tirelessly to ensure that the clinic runs smoothly.

Elective Medical students from 2015

Three of our elective medical students who visited in 2015, Jenny Sterry, Robert Kimmitt and Emma Chisholm recently ran a coffee morning for MMH at Priestfield Parish Church in Edinburgh. The mandasi at the coffee morning were very popular, and everybody enjoyed seeing the CCAP Choir and Mulanje Mission Gospel Singers in action courtesy of their wonderful DVDs. They raised £450 for bed sponsorship funds - thank you !

