



Urolink Newsletter, January 2024

Wishing you all happy and fulfilling 2024. Urolink has been very busy since the last newsletter in July. I would, first, like to congratulate Shekhar Biyani on his British Empire award in the New Year's honours list. Shekhar, apart from being one of my heroes, is with Steve Payne, the backbone of Urolink, and although the award was given for education he also deserves it for his work with Urolink. So I am delighted.

Shekhar and Mike Ng chaired the Urolink session at the BAUS ASM in June when Nish Bedi reported on his experience teaching trans-perineal biopsy as a TUF fellow in Zambia. Lesley Hunt, a colorectal surgeon from Sheffield, showed us how clinical officers in Sierra Leone outperformed UK ST trainees in simulated surgical skills exercises whilst Professor Peter Culmer, from the School of Mechanical Engineering in Leeds, demonstrated the importance of global surgeons collaborating with engineers. He showed the evolution of a retractor for "gas-free" laparoscopy from design, through manufacture, to clinical use.

Matt Trail took his 2022 TUF fellowship to teach in Tanzania and Richard Menzies-Wilson spent time with the Royal Berkshire team mentoring local surgeons to offer TURP in a bootcamp in rural Uganda. Paediatric urology training has continued with a further visit by Ram Subramaniam to Lilongwe and as faculty for the KCMC workshop. The Lester Eshleman 14th Urological workshop was, unfortunately, marred by the sad death of Professor Alfred Mteta a longtime friend to many of us at Urolink, and an important leader in Africa. He will be sorely missed by all. Despite this the workshop was a success, with more than 70 delegates and excellent feedback. Urolink funded the conference expenses, and provided 5 faculty members. Wilson To (a TUF Fellow) aided the workshop and stayed a further week to teach local trainees and medical students.

I travelled to assist with the COSESCA (Surgery College for Southern Africa) exams in Addis Ababa. We examined 14 candidates this year. We supported Orgeness Mbwambo to travel to examine. He now is a consultant at KCMC but training in stone surgery in South Africa. An increasing number of examiners are local urologists - most with strong links to Urolink, including the chief examiner elect, Charles Mabedi.

We are delighted to announce 2 project grants which have been awarded to Urolink allowing us to move toward endourology for stone surgery. Training in endourological stone surgery in low income countries has been pioneered by Graham Watson and the Meditech Trust. Two further centres in East Africa feel they are now ready to develop stone services and Urolink has secured funding from the Endourology fund for KCMC in Tanzania, and from the BJUI for Hawassa. BJUI has generously supported Hawassa in their development over the last 5 years. In addition, TUF awarded four fellowships in July and we were delighted that Wilson To, Katie Brodie, Rory Ferguson and Danni Whiting were chosen to receive these

awards, from a much larger field of applicants. Our thanks go out to all of our sponsors for their financial support.

One further accolade is that our Colo-rectal colleagues at the Association of Colo-Proctology (ACP) asked for our advice on how to start an overseas section, and have even called it Colo-Link. Delighted they are getting involved.

Highlights for the next 6 months are:

- Uro-gynae workshop with Nikesh Thiruchelvam, Tamsin Greenwell, two trainees and myself in Lilongwe, Malawi in February funded by Meditech
- Visits for 2 TUF fellows to KCMC in February
- Scoping visit by Shekhar to Mengo Hospital in Uganda in April
- Probably paediatric workshop with Ram and colleagues in Addis in May
- Emergency urology bootcamp in Hawassa in May
- Endourological Trust funded visit to KCMC to set up endoscopic stone surgery in June.
- Urolink session at BAUS – guest speaker Mumba Kaja, Zambian Urological Surgeon, and President of WISA.

....and, finally, a plea.

Urolink's activities are only limited by the number of BAUS members prepared to get involved. All Urolink does is teach both knowledge and skills, and support our urological colleagues in resource poor settings, often just in core urology. Getting involved is rewarding and restoring for those of us working in the NHS, something that has been shown, repetitively, by many longitudinal studies. I initially travelled alternate years so committing a lot of time isn't a requirement and there are plenty of educational activities, and things people can become involved with without leaving the shores of the UK.

If anyone want to discuss, please get in touch.

Suzie

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