



Urolink Newsletter – April 2025

Welcome to the latest edition of the Urolink Newsletter. 2024 was a busy and rewarding year, with our teams traveling to low resource countries in East and Southern Africa to share skills, mentor local colleagues, and help strengthen urological services. We have also continued supporting extraordinarily successful and rewarding visits of UK urology trainees generously funded by **TUF**.

Most of our partners centres have endoscopic prostate surgery established and are now training themselves. This has led to us moving onto supporting the introduction of more specialist urology services such as endoscopic stone surgery and urogynaecology. Furthermore, it is an interesting observation that life expectancy in Tanzania has increased from 50 in 2005 to 67 in 2025. This means they are beginning to see more urological cancers and other urological diseases of older men such as outflow obstruction. This opens up the opportunity for us to support the development of cancer services in the region.

As Urolink continue to support local teams in the development of these services funding continues to be important. The BAUS charity has now been registered on the 'Just Giving' platform to facilitate donations to help with Urolinks activities. If you are doing anything to raise donations for Urolink, and want to GiftAid the donations, then you can do that by [clicking the link here](#). Please copy the banner above into the comments box, to ensure that the donation is recognised as being aimed specifically to support Urolink!

Summary of Urolink activities 2024 – March 2025

Hawassa, Ethiopia - HUSCH

In **April 2024**, Dr. Pedro Campillo from Spain teamed up with Urolink at HUCSH in Hawassa to help local urologists come up to speed with minimally-invasive stone surgery. Despite the challenges of working without the C-arm and some of the equipment they'd typically use back home, the team managed to perform 14 PCNL's and 13 ureteroscopies over 3 weeks.

In **November 2024**, Will Finch and Matt Trail made their first trip to our project centre in Hawassa, sponsored by the **BJUI**, focusing on PCNL and upper tract stone surgery. Over four days, with support from Graham Watson, Shekhar Biyani, and Steve Payne, they performed 11 PCNL's over 4 days. The workshop was a fantastic example of early and mid-career consultants making a big impact.

In the same trip Shekhar Biyani and the local team led the first-ever urological emergencies simulation bootcamp in East Africa. The course was designed for general surgical residents and covered essential skills for managing ureteric injuries, testicular torsion, priapism and penile fracture. The feedback was fantastic, and with COSECSA endorsement potentially on the horizon, this bootcamp could become a regular training feature.

Lilongwe, Malawi – Kamuzu Central Hospital

In **February 2024**, Tamsin Greenwell, Nikesh Thiruchelvam and Suzie Venn conducted the first Urogynaecology workshop in Lilongwe, Malawi. The team provided formal teaching, carried out surgery, and set up a urodynamics service. Monthly urogynaecology MDTs were planned between the UK and Malawi over the year.

In **February 2025** Brendan Berry and Mayur Gami joined Tamsin Greenwell, Nikesh Thiruchelvam and Suzie Venn for a further Urogynaecology workshop supported by the Meditech Trust. Over the course of the visit, the local team gained competence in basic urodynamics, urethral bulking, rectus fascial slings and complex reconstruction including clam cystoplasty. The workshop marked a huge step forward, but the real challenge will be maintaining long-term sustainability by integrating these new techniques into daily practice.

Also in **February 2025** Ram Subramaniam returned to lead another hypospadias workshop in Lilongwe. Ram continued mentoring Charles Mabedi and Amaryllis Mapurisa in both simple and complex uro-genital surgeries. His report revealed how, thanks to three years of intensive mentoring, the team is now largely self-reliant, needing support only for the most complex cases.

Moshi, Tanzania - KCMC

In **February 2024** Rory Ferguson and Katie Brodie undertook TUF Teaching Fellowships at KCMC. Their experiences highlighted the benefits of early-career exposure to LMIC healthcare settings, with opportunities for both teaching and learning. They also developed friendships with local trainees during their time in Tanzania, which will hopefully reap long term benefit.

In **July 2024**, the BAUS section of Endourology through its fellowship fund supported the purchase of a C-arm for KCMC in Tanzania. Subu Subramonian and Aasem Chaudry travelled to run the first PCNL workshop. This was a great success, and the team, including Danielle Whiting who spent her TUF Fellowship there, has continued to support the development of stone surgery with a further visit in **February 2025** and ongoing monthly MDT meetings.

In **November 2024** Paul Anderson and Suzie Venn were at KCMC running a workshop mentoring the local team on complex posterior urethral surgery and anterior urethral reconstruction. In just one week, they performed 15 cases, including a particularly tricky posterior urethral injury with a thigh fistula. The local team's growing confidence and skill in these procedures was hugely encouraging.

Scoping visits

In a different model of hospital based links, a scoping visit by Shekhar Biyani and the Friends of Mengo Hospital Committee (from Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust) in **March 2024** held productive discussions with hospital management to Mengo Hospital in Kampala, Uganda. The plan is to introduce urological services at Mengo, starting with basic endoscopic surgery.

In **March 2024**, Nick Campain visited Ndola Teaching Hospital (NTH) in Zambia's Copperbelt region. Working alongside Simon Mukosai and Dr. Mumba Chalwe, the team assessed the hospital's needs and potential. Nick was particularly impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the local consultants and younger surgeons – so much so that Ndola is now officially a Urolink partner centre, supported by **TUF**.

In **November 2024** Steve Payne visited St. Paul's Hospital in Addis Ababa at the invitation of Prof. Masresha Solomon. The visit highlighted the impact of funding cuts from the Susan Thompson Buffet Foundation on urology services. Despite the challenges, the local team is eager to build skills in endoscopic upper tract stone surgery and posterior urethroplasty, with Addis Ababa now looking like a promising hub for future Urolink partnerships.

COSECSA FCS Clinical Exams

Charles Mabedi from Lilongwe, Malawi is now chair of the examiners. In **December 2024**, Mary Brown, Steve Payne and Suzie Venn headed to Harare in Zimbabwe for the COSECSA FCS clinical exams. In addition, Urolink supported Orogeness Mbwambo from KCMC in Moshi, Tanzania to attend to take part in the exams as well as be part of an organising committee for the first paediatric urology workshop held the day before the exams. A mixture of regional and international panel of examiners ran a thorough exam covering a broad spectrum of the COSECSA urology syllabus. All five candidates passed – a fantastic achievement – with Nakavizya Janet Nshinka from Ndola earning the gold medal for the top overall performance.

Looking Ahead

It's been an inspiring year of growth, skill-sharing, and collaboration, with incredible progress made by local colleagues across the region. Thanks to the dedication of Urolink members, and the financial support of our funders we're seeing lasting improvements in urological care and patient outcomes. We're excited to continue building on this momentum in the months ahead – and as always, thank you to all the teams for their tireless commitment to making a real difference.

The Urolink Team