

Award: Urolink SURG Award 2005
Report by: John McGrath
Visit: Tanzania, June 24th – July 2nd 2005

Background:

The current trip was a follow-up visit to help promote links that I had ongoing involvement with, originating during my 3-month sabbatical in Tanzania last year. There were three primary aims:

- 1. Selian Lutheran Hospital** – to re-visit the hospital, perform surgery with Paul Kisanga and aim to establish a new link between Selian and a UK Urologist.
- 2. Shighatini Lutheran Dispensary** – to meet the Bishop of Pare and Dr Mark Mvungi with a view to initiating the funding and building of a new theatre facility in the village of Shighatini, North Pare.
- 3. Institute of Urology, KCMC** – to operate with and keep up informal links with the local surgeons at the ASEA Institute of Urology. To deliver basic urological equipment.

Selian Lutheran Hospital

I have previously reported on the healthcare provision at Selian and it is no exaggeration to state that Selian is now offering one of the highest standards of medical and surgical care in Tanzania. It remains a Church-based NGO but has increased its fees dramatically in preparation for opening a large hospital in ‘downtown’ Arusha where those that can pay will pay these fees (or higher). The revenue from the new town hospital will then help fund the current hospital (based out of town in the Mount Meru foothills). It looks as though the ‘Robin Hood Principle’ will operate with the majority of revenue being raised in town and allowing the overall service to continue to expand and flourish. Paul Kisanga continues to perform TURP and open prostatectomy in addition to orthopaedics, general surgery and trauma. Both Ru MacDonagh and I spent a day operating with him and were again impressed with his technical skill and aptitude for endoscopy despite his low volume workload and minimal formal urological training. The visit was extremely successful as Paul remains motivated to expand his urological repertoire and was extremely keen to now formalise a ‘link’ with the UK.

- ? **Progress:** Mr Seamus MacDermott, Consultant Urological Surgeon at Torbay, has enthusiastically expressed his interest in developing this link. Ru and I have already met with Seamus and discussed the new link and a provisional visit is planned for early next year. It is likely that I will accompany Seamus for the first few days of his visit. Paul Kisanga will need support in training as well as updating his endoscopic equipment.

Shighatini Lutheran Dispensary

This small dispensary is based in the Pare Mountains, East of Moshi, and is overseen by Dr Mark Mvungi. Mark is a Urology Trainee at KCMC and I visited the dispensary during my visit last year. At that time, only basic medical services were available and the dispensary was staffed by a Medical Officer during the week, with Mark seeing difficult cases on Saturdays. Early last year, my wife and I made arrangements with Mark for a second phase of the dispensary (Maternal and Child Health) to develop and for a midwife to be employed. The dispensary is now able to provide childhood vaccinations, mother and child antenatal services and assisted vaginal deliveries. I travelled back to Shighatini to meet up with Mark and the Bishop of Pare (Bishop Stefano Msangi) with a view to initiating a third phase of development that would provide operating facilities and a male and female ward. The Lutheran Church provides 25 – 30% of healthcare in Tanzania and, as such, the Bishops are the effective ‘heads’ of the hospitals. We had a full morning of discussions and agreed that Phase III would proceed later this year. The project will require a capital investment of £20,000 and will upgrade the Dispensary to a ‘Health Centre’. As a consequence, the government will provide funding for basic medical and nursing staff. Fortuitously, Global Health Missions, an American-based charity have agreed to provide all the medical equipment and upgrade the ‘hardware’ on an annual basis. The initial remit of the new facility will include the provision of caesarean section, acute surgical services (appendicectomy, incarcerated hernia etc.) and cases of trauma. The aim is to make the health centre self-funding in the long-term.

? **Progress:** The project finances will be overseen by the charity IMPACT UK. The foundations, sand, gravel, local builders etc. are now in place. The first delivery of medical equipment has left the USA and is due in Shighatini later this month. After Christmas, the Lutheran Church will apply to the Tanzanian Government to request upgrading of the Dispensary to a Healthcentre facility thereby allowing advertisement and appointment of key medical staff.

Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre

I spent several days operating alongside the consultants and trainees at the Institute of Urology. I delivered some basic urology kit donated by Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital (Elliks, sutures, catheters, swabs, drains etc.). I also had the opportunity to visit Jasper Mbwambo’s private clinic as well as visiting Alfred Mteta and his family at home. They both spoke very highly of BAUS / Urolink’s involvement with the Institute and particularly of Phil Thomas’s help over recent years.