

## REPORT OF VISIT TO KILIMANJARO CHRISTIAN MEDICAL CENTRE (KCMC), TANZANIA JULY 2006

I was privileged to spend July 2006 working in the Urology Department of the KCMC, in Northern Tanzania.

### **Background**

The hospital is one of the largest medical centres and teaching hospitals in East Africa and provides secondary health care to over ten million people.



In addition, it acts as a tertiary referral centre, with a potential referral base from many areas in Tanzania and parts of southern Kenya. It is located in the town of Moshi, in northern Tanzania and has superb views of Mount Kilimanjaro. The climate – at least in July – is idyllic with warm, but dry days and fairly cool nights. The town of Moshi is generally safe and has a reasonable selection of bars, restaurants and local shops. There are large numbers of companies and agents able to arrange safaris and expeditions to Mount Kilimanjaro.

### **Department Staffing**

The Urology Department is staffed by two Consultants, one “Registrar” equivalent and one “SHO” equivalent. In addition, there are up to two “Fellows” undertaking training in Urology. The Fellows are usually general surgeons, of variable experience.

### **Aims and Objectives of visit**

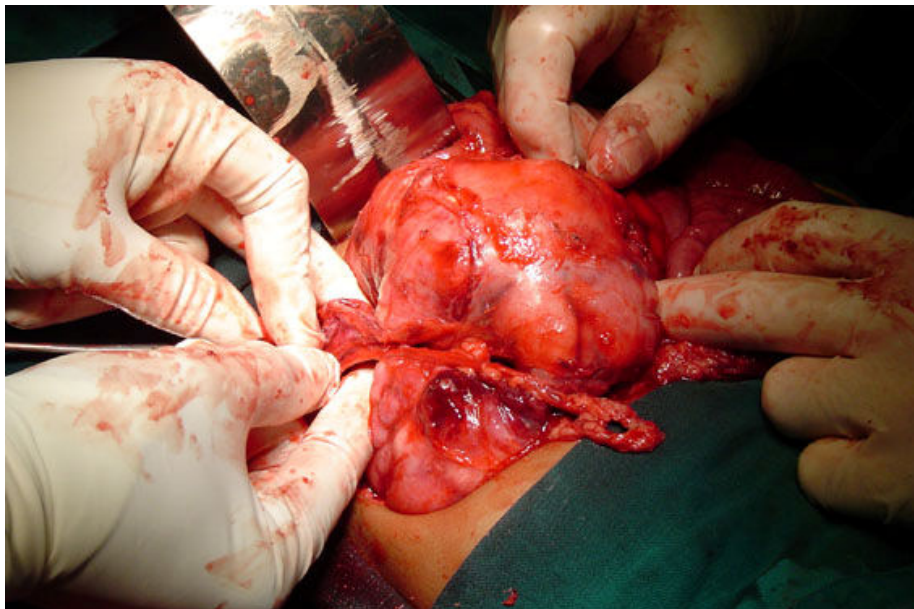
My role during the visit was supernumerary, but I was made to feel extremely welcome by everyone and took an active part in all theatre sessions and ward rounds. There were three broad objectives that I had hoped to achieve during the visit. To a large extent, I fulfilled all of these:

- Participation in the local teaching program

- Assisting the surgeons at KCMC to develop skill and expertise in Endourological procedures, particularly TURP. In Tanzania, the availability of endourological equipment is limited. More importantly, the experience of the local trainee surgeons is limited.
- To gain useful experience in open Urological surgery



The operative experience was fabulous and the range of pathology encountered was also unique, compared with standard practice in the UK. I performed several open cystolithotomies and pyelolithotomies, as well as Wilm's tumour nephrectomy (very common in Tanzania). I also assisted with hypospadias surgery and various other paediatric and gynaecological operations.



The visit provided an excellent opportunity to become involved with provision of health care in the developing world. In addition, the chance to spend a short time living in and experience the culture of East Africa provided a memorable experience for me and my family.



#### **Drawbacks and Suggestions for Improvement**

It was frustrating that as increasing numbers of TURPs are being performed at KCMC, the number of open prostatectomies is decreasing and we didn't perform any open prostate surgery in the time I was there. Nevertheless, I was able to become involved with teaching TURP, in an environment where the overall experience of endoscopy is still limited.

Although the medical / nursing staff speak English, many of the patients do not and this can make communication difficult. As a result, it was not possible to participate in the on call rota (I'll get over this!!), or see patients in the outpatient clinic.

I do not think that any other significant changes could be made, or need to be made. The experience gained by any UK trainee visiting KCMC would be valuable and rewarding. My only personal suggestion, especially to anyone who is intending to bring their family with them, would be to make prior arrangements for use of a car / 4x4.

#### **Conclusion**

I would certainly not hesitate in recommending any UK trainee to visit KCMC, for one to two months. I would be happy to talk to anyone interested.

*Neil Harris  
Urology Trainee, South West Region*