

**REPORT – SURGICAL, GENERAL PRACTICE AND DENTAL MISSION 17/07/2014 – 27/07/2014**

This was the fourth surgical mission to Fiji and first to Labasa hospital. The aim was to teach, respite and help with difficult surgical cases which otherwise would not have been done or stayed on waiting lists for a long period of time.

This time we had the company of a dentist, urologist as well as general Practitioner colleagues

The team members included

Rishi Ram	General Surgeon
Avinesh Kumar	General Surgeon
Nathan Kershaw	Anaesthetist
Jim Cairns-Nelson	Anaesthetic technician
Kathy Moore	Theatre nurse
David Smith	Theatre Nurse
Glenda Cairns-Nelson	Recovery and ward nurse
Vijenti Chandra	General Practitioner
Amrita Kumar	General Practitioner
Ranjini Ram	General Practitioner
Kampta Samalia	Urologist
Surend Chandra	Dentist

17/7/2014 – Team met at the airport



Teaching :

#### **Doctors**

- hands on teaching in the operating theatre of modern techniques of laparoscopic surgery
- Lectures – grand round,
- Small groups at the end the day
- Ward rounds – daily ward rounds with the registrars and the consultants

#### **Nurses**

- Formal lectures to the nurses in groups
- Small group session
- One to one teaching
- Handling and care of laparoscopic gear
- Importance of transfer of information between different members involved in looking after the patient.
- Informed local nurses as how certain procedures are done in NZ.
- Lectures given to local nursing students

#### **Anaesthetic technician**

- Taught local staff the importance of looking after and checking of anaesthetic machines, ward based patient monitors etc.

#### **Transport**

Being in close proximity to the hospital helped with this issue greatly. Labasa hospital was very helpful in this matter in providing transport in a timely manner.

There was also help available from our local friends.

#### **Meals**

Breakfast was provided by at the local hotel funded by FOFH. During week day, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea were provided by the Labasa hospital.

Evening meals – Mr Kohli was able to delegate each evening to an organisation to cater for the meals. This was greatly appreciated by all the volunteers

#### **Team debrief**

#### **Points discussed**

A complete set of laparoscopic instruments (near new) were donated to the surgical team to help advance their laparoscopic skills.

Labasa Hospital is keen for us to have regular visits but we have mentioned that we will be reviewing our visits based on the time available and availability of the funding.

We acknowledged there support in terms of providing transport and lunches for the visiting team.

Sister in charge is keen to up skill all the theatre staff especially with laparoscopic surgery.

#### **Points raised which could be actioned for the safety of patient**

**DVT prophylaxis** – It is essential to have complete DVT prophylaxis which includes anticoagulants, TED stockings, Calf compressors and early mobilization. Given the limited resources in Labasa the things that could be done easily are

- 1 - Investing in a calf compressor device which could be used in theatre especially in long operations.

## 2. Early mobilization

**Body warmers** – This is a simple device which blows warm air over the patient to keep them warm while the surgery is performed. This greatly helps with patient recovery.

**Patient notes** – all to be filed together i.e. inpatient and outpatient notes so that there is easy access the patients past history. This will help prevent duplicating of things already done before. Entry in the notes to be done in a chronological manner.

**Theatre Storage and space utilization** - itemizing and clearing some of the things not used or expired to create space for things used currently. Making storage cupboards.

**Infection control** – regular hand washing between patients, soap or hand sanitisers easily available, wearing of single use gloves between patients, use of dry towels to wipe hands

### Highlights

Achieved a mission to make a difference to a small number of patients who would not have had their operations done locally.

Kept the mission within budget.

Donated laparoscopic gear for advancement of patient care.

Teaching – both hands on and didactic

### Disappointments

Could not do surgeries on all patients seen as we had time constraints and laparoscopic gear arriving late

### Future missions

- We would like Fiji Government to provide ongoing assistance to our missions, such as transport, meals, accommodation etc) as it does take a lot of pressure off the organisers and the volunteers. This leaves more time to dedicate to teaching and doing the jobs we go there for.
- The teams should give enough time between each overseas missions so that local staff can cope with the added work load.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- **Donations from Kimberly – Clarke, Johnson and Johnson Medical, EBOS Group, Grace Hospital, Olympus, Covedien, Medical Aid Abroad (MAA)**
- **Labasa Lions Club, Labasa Rotary Club, Charan Jeet Singh, Ami Kohli, Labasa Hospital and Bobby Raniga for providing dinners**
- **Labasa Hospital – providing lunches and transport to and from the hotel.**
- **Fellow trustees – for helping to make the mission successful**
- **Grand Eastern Hotel Management and staff making the stay a pleasant one**

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Thank you for giving the opportunity to serve Fiji

Rishi Ram FRACS  
General Surgeon  
Team Leader (FOFH) surgical mission

## News Paper reviews

### 1. Friends give to hospital <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=275405>

Luke Rawalai  
Saturday, July 26, 2014

PEOPLE of Labasa and the North will benefit from surgical instruments worth \$250,000 given by members of the Kiwi group, Friends of Fiji Health to the Labasa Hospital Board.

The group comprises medical specialists from hospitals in New Zealand who sacrificed their money and time with their family to take leave and volunteer at the Labasa Hospital.

Board chairman Ami Kohli applauded the good work done by the team during their week-long stint carrying out free surgery for patients at the hospital.

Mr Kohli said the vast knowledge and experience shared during the team's visit would greatly benefit staff members of the Labasa Hospital.

"The board had facilitated the team's stay in Labasa while hospital staff took charge of their visitors during their working hours," he said.

"We encourage this form of visits as it also involves the exchange of experience and knowledge between medical specialists.

"We are also expecting two more team visits like this from volunteer groups willing to offer their services at the hospital."

### 2. Medical assistance (<http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=275310>)

Salaseini Moceiwai  
Friday, July 25, 2014

a group of former Fiji residents who are health professionals provided medical clinics to about 80 patients in Labasa this week.

Accompanied by some of their colleagues in New Zealand, members of the Friends of Fiji Health organisation brought a sigh of relief and smiles to the patients with their medical clinics, advice and surgeries.

One of the organisation's trustees and general surgeon Dr Rishi Ram told this newspaper on Wednesday night they had visited Fiji for the past four years.

"Three of our earlier trips were made to the Lautoka Hospital and now we have decided to come to Labasa Hospital to provide our service here free of charge," Dr Ram said.

"The team is made up of doctors, nurses and other health experts who have a common goal of assisting local experts with their work. Since our arrival to the hospital last Thursday, we have continued to medically examine patients.

"We conducted surgeries on some of them (patients) but because of the time constraints and the lack of resources, we weren't able to operate on all of the patients who were recommended for surgery.

"We will leave behind the medical items and equipment we brought with us to supplement the supplies locally. This is part of our efforts to reach out to the people here and we are really glad to have provided our service to the people here.

"This is a form of giving back to the community we once lived in."

Dr Ram added their trip would not have been possible through the kind support from corporate bodies, individuals and the support of their families back in New Zealand.

Friends of Fiji Health is a New Zealand-registered charity organisation that was established in July 2010.