

Report on Module 2, 2015 – Knee

The Knee module was held at the National Referral Hospital Conference room in Honiara Solomon Islands from June 8th to June 17th, 2015. There were 6 trainees in this module. They are Dr. James Tewa'ani and Dr. Stephen Kodovaru from Solomon Islands, Dr. Kabiri Itaka from Kiribati, Dr. Shaun Mauiliu and Areta Samuelu from Samoa, and Dr Mark Rokobuli from Fiji. The lectures were delivered by Dr. Bruce Caldwell from Sydney, Prof Nik Friederich and Dr Jochen Ruckstuhl from Switzerland and Dr. Des Soares from Brisbane and Dr. Patrick Houasia from Solomon Islands.

In the Knee module the students were taught a systematic approach to the management of trauma and degenerative conditions affecting the knee in orthopaedics. This included clinical history taking and a thorough clinical examination with emphasis on a systematic approach to the examination of the knee joint. We then progressed to common conditions affecting the knee including sporting injuries, other trauma and degenerative conditions like osteoarthritis.



The students were assessed with an examination on the final day of the course including a written paper and 3 practical tasks including arthroscopy on a simulator (see below) an ACL reconstruction and high tibial osteotomy on plastic bones. Overall the 10 day module was intense and it was obvious the students were stimulated to learn. There was a marked improvement in their clinical examination skills. They spent most evenings revising the material as each day always commenced with a review session of the material taught the day before. The students are now already reading ahead to prepare for the next module on the Upper limb commencing on 30 September 2015.

Lectures were supplemented with practical demonstrations. Each morning we commenced with a ward round seeing six patients and getting the students to present the history and clinical signs of the patients. Their management was then discussed and suggestions for improvement were made. This was a useful exercise as we were able to improve clinical skills. It was also helpful to try and elucidate clinical reasoning and decision making and help with developing these skills.

In the afternoons we did a practical exercise involving a surgical skill. The focus was on arthroscopy.

We were privileged to have access to ArthOS a high tech virtual reality knee arthroscopy simulator which was generously provided by VirtaMed AG who are the leaders in surgical simulators. Each day the students rotated between 2 or 3 practical stations. On the simulator they performed a graduated learning program using the excellent courses in basic and advanced arthroscopic skills and basic and advanced surgical management of clinical pathology such as synovectomy, meniscectomy and loose body retrieval. In addition they performed an ACL reconstruction and



a high tibial osteotomy on sawbones. Internal fixation of fractures around the knee such as a supracondylar fracture of the femur and tibial plateau fracture of the knee were performed using plastic “bones”. These were greatly appreciated by the students as they were directly relevant to clinical problems they face daily.

Our thanks to the staff and patients of the National Referral Hospital Honiara and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Solomon Islands Government for the use of the Conference room and for allowing us to conduct the course there. Our thanks also to our caterers from the Mothers Union Women's group who provided nutritious food for the duration of the course. Finally this module would not have been possible without the generous financial support from Peace Nexus Foundation and Hans Joerg Wyss.