

Report on Module 3, 2015 – Upper limb

The Upper limb module was held at the National Referral Hospital Conference room in Honiara Solomon Islands from September 30th to October 7th, 2015. There were 5 trainees in this module. They are Dr. James



Tewa'ani and Dr. Stephen Kodovaru from Solomon Islands, Dr. Kabiri Itaka from Kirbati, Dr. Areta Samuelu from Samoa, and Dr Mark Rokobuli from Fiji. The lectures were delivered by Dr. Paul Hitchen and Dr. Stephen Quain from Sydney, and Dr. Des Soares from Brisbane and Dr. Patrick Houasia from Solomon Islands.

In the Upper limb module the students were taught a systematic approach to the management of trauma and degenerative

conditions affecting the Upper limb in orthopaedics. This included clinical history taking and a thorough clinical examination with emphasis on a systematic approach to the examination of the Upper limb joint. We then progressed to common conditions affecting the Upper limb including sporting injuries (instability), 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. In addition the students performed various practical tasks each day including an arthroscopic acromioplasty on a sawbones scapula and external and internal fixation on various fracture configurations in plastic bones in the upper limb. Overall the 8 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 Trauma commencing on 1 February 2016.

Lectures were supplemented with practical demonstrations. Each morning we commenced with a ward round seeing four 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 upper limb trauma, including hand trauma. Internal fixation of fractures around the Upper limb such as a supracondylar fracture of the humerus and distal radius fracture 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.

