



On Saturday 22nd November 2014, our trust led a team of 10 healthcare professionals to volunteer in Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) in Tanzania to undertake the final stages of a UK Aid funded project to improve care for patients with burns injuries.

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world and many families use kerosene to light their homes and firewood for cooking. This can cause terrible accidents and serious injuries. Thousands of men, women and children experience debilitating physical and emotional consequences from burns injuries. However, through our longstanding international links with the hospital, Northumbria has undertaken the Burns Project to lead the development of a new treatment facility at KCMC so it can provide more advanced and efficient care for patients with burns.

Last November our team worked in a number of wards and departments in the hospital including finance, management, nursing, psychology and surgery to provide all-round support. For team member Johanna Wolfe, Finance Manager at North Tyneside Hospital, it was her first visit to Tanzania. Jo said, "When I was offered the opportunity to join the Burns Team I really didn't know what to expect and I

wasn't sure how as a Finance Manager I could help. However, when I arrived I soon realised that there was so much I could do, such as teaching staff about budgets and accounts so they could manage hospital finances better. The experience for me was humbling, challenging and very rewarding".

For other team members, such as Nurse Practitioner Peter Smith and Endoscopy Specialist Nurse Sue Colley, they have volunteered at KCMC a number of times but every visit always brings new challenges. Peter said, "Working in KCMC is very different to working in the UK. Not only is the culture and environment of Tanzania very different, but it can get extremely hot and the hospital is over-crowded with patients. Good dressings and appropriate medication can be hard to come by and the power supply is really unreliable. Some cases can present huge challenges for the team but we work together with staff at KCMC to build their skills and knowledge.

On the trip, the team's skills and experience of providing care for burns were put to the test as they were presented with some of the most extreme injuries they had ever seen. Burns specialist Nurses, Katherine Hadall and Meg Spence, found the extremity of some injuries unbelievable.

Mr Jeremy Rawlins, Plastic Surgeon, and Mr Keith Judkins, Anaesthetist, performed life-saving and transformational surgery on patients which was a huge challenge, having to perform complex procedures without access to the modern, highly specialised equipment they would normally use. Through their determination and with the support of the rest of the team and their counterparts at KCMC they demonstrated that by working and learning together, the hospital could overcome the obstacles and save many more patients' lives in future.

With full patient recovery as their goal, the team's work in the hospital didn't end there as they also turned their care and attention to the psychological and emotional trauma experienced by patients with burns. Psychologist, Jerome Marshall, part of the Burns Project from the outset, continued to train staff at KCMC, so they can provide professional emotional support to patients and their families.

Improving burns care is not limited to inside hospital doors and the project also focusses on prevention too. So during the trip, the team worked out in the community to deliver burns awareness activities.

Tony Thompson, a nurse and former first aid instructor, felt the activities in the community were just as important as the work in the hospital because they empowered local people to become life savers and change attitudes. Tony said, "Delivering first aid training and educating children about the causes and effects of burns was such a valuable part of the project. We encouraged them to think differently about illness and disability and to support people in their community. Consequently, the project also improves care in the community too and empowers the future generations to create a healthier Tanzania".

CREATING A HEALTHIER TANZANIA.

The Burns Project was made possible by a grant from UK Aid and the support of Northumbria's charity, Bright. Read more about the burns project, by following team leader Brenda Longstaff's blog on the trust website: www.northumbria.nhs.uk/get-involved/charity/international-links or email brenda.longstaff@northumbria.nhs.uk / Tel. 0191 203 1351. Being linked with KCMC for over fifteen years, Northumbria has trained over 4,000 Tanzanians in a variety of medical and allied healthcare professions. In the words of our Tanzanian partners, msaasante kwa msaada – thank you for your support.



← Peter Smith with Theatre Nurses in KCMC (Page 4)

← Sue Colley and Tony Thompson teaching Burns awareness in a local school



Mr Jeremy Rawlins with patient following surgery →