

Research, Education & Travel Grants 2011
Winner of the Sargant Fund
Dr Rola Hallam

Project Title:

Improving infant and child mortality rates in Uganda through improving critical care : the Nsambya Hospital Project

Project Description

The under-5 mortality rate in Uganda is 128 deaths per 1000, compared to 6 per 1000 in the UK (WHO data). It is a Millennium Development Goal to reduce this mortality by two thirds by 2015. Nsambya hospital is a non-governmental, not-for-profit hospital serving as a referral centre for children in Kampala and surrounding districts in Uganda, with an annual average of 2500 children admitted to the paediatric ward, and 2000 newborns on their neonatal unit.

I visited Nsambya Hospital in Kampala whilst on the Anaesthesia developing world course in March 2011. This visit was generously funded by the Stanley Rowbotham travel grant, RCOA.

The lead paediatrician approached me about setting up a link with them with the aim of improving neonatal and child mortality rates in their district, through improving their recognition and management of the critically ill child and introduce a paediatric critical care unit.

I have formed a network of experts in the field who will be involved in this project. This network of volunteers comprises 3 Paediatric Intensive Care consultants from Great Ormond Street (GOS), Stanford, and Harvard, a British paediatric registrar currently living in Uganda, and a senior nurse from GOS intensive care unit.

The project will have the following four phases:

Data collection + Design

Initiation

Implementation

Maintenance

This proposal seeks funding to facilitate the initial data collection and design phase of the project.

For the initial data collection phase I propose to conduct:

1: A Visit to the team at Nsambya Hospital in October 2011 for the following:

- a) A needs assessment
- b) Assessing the current level of care using the WHO assessment tool for hospital care of children
- c) Using the WHO mortality rate audit tool to assess current mortality rates

2: Analyse data

3: Design a phased response to include

- a) Education and training of health care providers in the recognition and management of the critically ill child
- b) Introduce monitoring and basic standards of care according to national and international guidelines
- c) Budgetary planning
- d) Design an appropriate and sustainable model of care for the unit

- e) Curriculum development
- f) Equipment procurement
- g) Local vendor identification
- h) Team member identification

I am highly motivated and enthusiastic and recognise this is a long term project that needs to be carefully planned and executed to be sustainable and successful in achieving its aims. This project is in-line with my career aspirations of working in international health development. Working towards this goal I also plan to complete a one-year masters degree course in global health and development at University College Hospital.

This project will help me to further improve a variety of transferable skills and so contribute to my personal professional development. The rigorous data collection and analysis required will require meticulous research project planning, methodology and statistical analysis. The assessment of hospital care and implementation of international guidelines helps with quality improvement and clinical governance, processes integral to the optimal workings of the NHS. Through dealing with the Nsambya hospital managers, I am already cultivating my abilities in negotiation, management and leadership.