

RCoA Research, Education & Travel Grants 2016

Award: The Sargant Fund

Applicant: Dr Jolene Moore

Project Title: *Obstetric anaesthesia & MOEWS in The Gambia*

Project Description:

Maternal mortality in The Gambia is currently 430 per 100,000. The Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital (EFSTH) is the largest hospital and major referral hospital in The Gambia, with over 500 beds. The maternity unit consists of 80 beds and delivers over 3,000 babies per year. There is an antenatal ward, labour ward, postnatal ward, high dependency unit and operating theatres. Anaesthesia is provided by nurse anaesthetists.

The University of Aberdeen has a formal agreement with the MRC and The University of Gambia School of Medicine for a medical elective and exchange programme and the University affiliated charity "The Soapbox Collaborative" works with a number of sites within The Gambia to reduce maternal mortality with a focus on infection control. Recent statistics suggest the rates of maternal infections and sepsis is higher in The Gambia than in many other African countries.

Early warning scores are points or colour coded systems used to detect changes in physiological parameters and prompt early recognition and management of deteriorating patients. CEMACH reports recommend the use of modified versions for the obstetric population (MOEWS). There is currently limited use of such systems in low resource settings where there is a need for simple, low cost interventions to help reduce maternal mortality.

In 2015, I worked with the University of Aberdeen, the Soapbox Collaborative and one of our other linked sites to pilot a maternal early warning score system in a major referral hospital in Ethiopia. This involved utilising the student exchange programme as a means of monitoring and evaluation, with my role being to oversee the project, modify and introduce the early warning system and provide staff training on the system as well as training in post-operative care, recognition and management of the unwell patient and obstetric anaesthesia. The MOEWS system is now in widespread use at the site.

EFSTH are keen that we pilot a similar system at their maternity unit, and I plan to travel to The Gambia in December 2016 to introduce this, provide training on the system as well as training on recognition and management of the unwell patient, post-operative monitoring and care and obstetric anaesthesia. Training will be conducted as small group interactive workshops with maternity unit staff and anaesthesia nurses over a two week period.