The Kudjip Experience—Residents

KNH is a general hospital, serving as the District Hospital for a large area of the Whagi and Jimi valleys of central Papua New Guinea. We have about 130 inpatient beds, and in 2009 we saw 51,889 outpatient visits and 4,705 inpatient admissions. In addition we delivered about 1122 babies (that's about 90 per month, of which 18-19 are c-sections) and did 1765 surgical procedures. We saw over 800 people accept Christ.

We have a 32-bed adult medicine ward, a 31-bed surgical ward, a 32-bed pediatric ward, a 12-bed tuberculosis ward, and a 24-bed maternity ward. We have a labor suite with 3 delivery beds and space to expand to 6. We have a nursery the capacity of which is quite flexible, up to about 10 babies. We have one operating theater and a minor procedure room. Our Outpatient Department includes 8 exam rooms and a 2-bed procedure area. The Emergency Room consists of 7 beds and a 2-bed orthopedics area.

We have both fixed and portable x-ray machines, and can do most basic views. We have two ultrasound machines, which are used by all of our physicians. Our laboratory facilities include both hematology and chemistry, as well as microscopy and blood banking. Unfortunately, we have no microbiology lab, but we are able to do serological tests for syphilis, hepatitis B and HIV.

We are actively involved in care of patients with HIV and AIDS. We have a maternal-to-child-transmission prevention program. We currently provide HIV voluntary testing and counseling, and HART through our HIV clinic.

Our medical staff presently includes seven family physicians, a pediatrician and a general surgeon. All are residency-trained and board-certified. In addition, we frequently have visiting physicians in a variety of specialties.

Residents who come here usually have a wide variety of experience. They typically spend a portion of their rotation rounding on the pediatric, medical and maternity wards for morning rounds, and then spending the remainder of their day in the Outpatient department. Depending upon their level of training and their own aptitude they may see patients on their own, consulting with staff doctors as appropriate for each patient. They commonly are able to perform more procedures than they would in their home country. These include thoracentesis, pericentesis, lumbar puncture, suturing of lacerations, incision and drainage, ultrasound, vaginal deliveries, dilatation and curettage and manual extraction of retained placenta. They may assist in the operating theater. Depending upon their interest, level of training and aptitude, they may perform individual steps of operations under the direct supervision of a staff doctor, and may perform cesarean sections with staff supervision.

They take call; although staff is available as backup, it is up to the resident to decide when he or she needs to consult with them.

We have a limited library, but it contains material that is relevant to what we do, and some recent publications. Residents are encouraged to read and study regarding clinical problems that they encounter here. In addition, our doctors all enjoy teaching, and are always eager to discuss clinical problems. We have good internet access, and have access to a World Health Organization-sponsored database of medical literature.
Residents participate in the spiritual care of patients. Residents are encouraged to pray with and for their patients, and to offer witness and spiritual counsel (as much as possible, given linguistic and cultural limitations).

Residents have the opportunity to work with and get to know Papua New Guinean physicians. We are a training site for a post graduate training program in rural and remote medicine. Registrars (equivalent to residents in the US) come here for surgical rotations, and may come for other rotations in the future. Frequently Papua New Guinean resident physicians (equivalent to interns in the US) come here for a general rural rotation.

Outside the hospital the resident has opportunities to gain an understanding of the people of the Whagi Valley. They often visit nearby villages, visit with local people and attend cultural events. There are many interesting hikes in the vicinity of KNH that afford opportunities to see both people and beautiful scenery. Visitors usually go into the nearby town of Mount Hagen once or twice during their stay. (Most find that once is more than enough!)

In addition, residents usually get to know the staff of KNH well. They are usually invited into the homes of the medical and non-medical missionaries, and are included in activities on the station. Those with a personal interest in medical missions have opportunities to ask questions of missionaries at various stages of their careers, and to discuss their own plans and aspirations with experienced missionaries. They also are able to observe how missionaries and their families live, and to gain an understanding of the challenges and the rewards of missionary life. Many residents who have been here are continuing to pursue plans to become missionaries. Two of our current staff physicians came here as both medical students and as residents. A number of other residents who rotated here have gone on to careers in missions as well.

The missionaries at Kudjip consider it a pleasure and a privilege to work with residents here. Many of the missionaries have maintained friendships over many years with people who they first met as residents here.