



UGANDA CHILDBIRTH INJURY FUND NEWSLETTER 2022

A charity to cure by surgery women made incontinent through complications in childbirth and surgical procedures. Please visit our website UCIF.co.uk

Registered UK Charity No 1099135

Dear friends and Supporters,

This year saw a return to normality for UCIF with all team members returning to take part in surgical fistula camps in Uganda. Over 250 women were operated on throughout the year, all having sustained injuries during childbirth.

Our camps included Kitovu mission Hospital in January, Kamuli Mission Hospital in February, June and October. Kuluva Hospital in May, Mubende Regional Referral Hospital in August, St Anthonys Hospital, Tororo in October and finally Kyangwali refugee settlement in November.

Dr Mhairi Collie, Dr Kate Darlow and Dr Cathrine Reimers accompanied by Dr Ian Asiimwe and Dr Alphons Matovu conducted the surgery. Ishbel and Christine covered the nursing care for most of the camps alongside their Ugandan colleagues.

All camps had trainee surgeons in attendance. Dr Martha a Ugandan finalist in Urology for COSECSA commented in her report to us 'the experience was like nothing I have ever seen or been before. It was not only educative it was also an extremely emotional experience. The women had endured suffering that had dealt a blow to both their esteem and dignity, I could tell some had lost hope to live. It was wonderful to see these women smile again'.

The fistula nurse training programme developed by Ishbel and Dr Ian Asimwe is now being implemented in most of the hospitals UCIF support in Uganda. Joan and Joanita are our very skilled fistula nurse trainers taking many students through the competency-based nurse training programme. They are using our recently published book on fistula nursing care as well as a training plan and short videos we have produced to help improve nursing care. Ishbel Campbell continues to provide mentorship for the nurse training programme, liaising with specialists in the field of fistula care.

In recognition of Ishbel's ongoing work with improving the fistula nursing care she was nominated for a global healthcare award in The Scottish Healthcare awards and was a finalist out of 750 nominees for awards.



One of our success stories this year concerns a young 20-year-old lady who sadly presented with a very typical obstetric fistula story. At 19 years of age with her first pregnancy she laboured in her village with a traditional birth attendant (an untrained local birthing assistant). A lack of recognition of obstructed labour, and a long journey to the hospital resulted in a significant delay in delivering her baby.

She arrived at the hospital with no money and unable to pay for her care. She was turned away to find the money for treatment. By the time she found someone to fund her care the baby had died, and she had developed an obstetric fistula. She had a torrid post delivery recovery with a 6 week stay in hospital due to sepsis.

Not only did she miss the funeral of her baby daughter, she returned home to find her partner had taken another wife. She was left incontinent of urine, unable to leave the house or live independently from her mother.

In the words of one of our Ugandan trainee fistula surgeons Dr Vincent- 'it is indeed depressing when you set out to marry and start a family only to end up being socially isolated from your family and the entire community. You get subjected to unimaginable poverty in your life'.

She attended the UCIF camp in Kamuli in June with her brother as her carer and was successfully operated on and was discharged after 2 weeks dry again. Her physical recovery was complete but with the support of our charity partner Uganda Village Project she attended a rehabilitation and reintegration project in Iganga for 2 months. Here she learned new skills and made new friends among the fistula survivors. She has now settled in Iganga and is living a happy life having integrated into the community, selling the garments she makes.



Without your generous support we would be unable to change the lives of women like Agnes above.

In November Dr Ian Asiimwe and Ishbel Campbell travelled to Maputo in Mozambique to attend the International Conference of Fistula surgeons. They

presented 3 papers at conference on behalf of UCIF. Ishbel presented on improving fistula nursing care, and a protocol for nurses discharging fistula patients and Dr Asimwe presented on mobilisation strategies for fistula patients presenting for care. All presentations were well received at conference.

The conference was a great opportunity for networking with other key players in fistula care, promoting UCIF as a voice in care for birth trauma in Uganda. Dr Asimwe found the opportunity to learn new surgical techniques invaluable. It was also a great opportunity to share the work we have been doing in research and training.

Finally, our chairman Mhairi Collie met Princess Anne this year to collect her OBE award. This was honoured for improving the lives of others in the UK and abroad through surgery. We are all delighted for her enormous achievement.



Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a joyous New Year.

Love Brian, Mhairi, Kate, Ishbel, Christine and Sarah

X

Trustees: Brian Hancock, Mhairi Collie, Kate Darlow, Ishbel Campbell, Christine Wood, Sarah Fraser

Office address: Sarah Fraser (Treasurer) 2 Murrayfield Road, Edinburgh, EH12 6EJ

Email: ugandachildbirthinjury@gmail.com

