

INTERPLAST UK

Registered Charity No 328688

Mission to W Pratiksha Hospital, India, 28th February – 12th March 2016

Sunday 28th February marked the beginning of a 2-week mission for the 13 volunteers who made up Interplast UK's team for Project Revive. Each volunteer took time out of their usual routines and responsibilities to bring medical aid to those who would otherwise have little chance of accessing it.

Charles Viva, Georgios Pafitanis, Rikke Holmgaard, Emma Docherty, Pia Meinertz, Ghalib Mukadam and Shaima El Noor made up the Interplast UK surgical team, with David Viva, Sadia Durrani, Louise Newman and Rachel Burnett providing general medical support and Celine Alexander-Brown and Beth Elenor in the roles of team co-ordinator and assistant. Some team members had been on mission with Interplast UK before, whilst others were volunteering for the first time.



Interplast UK team members with partners in Project Revive from W Pratiksha Hospital, ASFI (Acid Survivors Foundation of India), Ritinjali & AA Dermascience

The team arrived at the hotel in Gurgaon just after midnight on 29th February 2016. For some, it had been a long journey, lasting more than 24 hours. The first day at the hospital saw the team participating in the screening of potential patients. Surgery started on the morning of the second day. Screening continued throughout the fortnight, as news of the mission spread and people came from long distances.

Over the 2-week period, **167** patients were screened and **80** surgical procedures carried out on 50 men, women and children between the ages of 5 and 52 years. Many patients received surgery for burns and acid attacks. Some operations lasted for over three hours and involved extensive reconstructive surgery.

A typical day at the hospital began with the pre-op ward round, which took place between 8 and 9 a.m., to meet patients who would be operated on that day. During this time, good communication between the patient, their family, the hospital medical team and Interplast UK personnel about all aspects of patient care was a priority.

Team member Sadia Durrani, being fluent in Hindi and Urdu, was able to help ensure effective communication.

Following this, patients in post-op were checked on daily to ensure individual after care needs, such as medications and dressing changes, would be met. Aside from medical care, it was here in the post-op ward that patients and staff were able to put donations from supporters of Interplast UK into good use, giving children teddies, toys and games to play with. These were greatly appreciated and helped reduce any anxiety that may have been felt by patients, creating a positive atmosphere for those staying at the hospital.



This little girl is looking forward to improved hand function.



After the ward checks, the team dispersed every day to begin their tasks, some leaving for theatre and the rest staying on the ward. Each day was organised in the same professional manner so that as many patients as possible could receive quality treatment in the limited time frame. Interplast UK volunteers soon got to know one another, bonded together as a team and supported each other in many different ways.

Although the team worked very hard, often for 10 hours a day or more, there was time for a visit to the Taj Mahal and to Akshardham, a temple complex in New Delhi. Some enjoyed shopping at beautiful local markets and opportunities to experience the nightlife of Gurgaon and Delhi. The hospitality of our hosts at W Pratiksha Hospital was exceptional, allowing the team a fantastic taste of India's culture and beauty.

It was a privilege for Interplast UK team members to be part of this project. As always, we are grateful for our supporters and sponsors at home, who enable us to go out and do this work – thank you, everyone.

Beth Elenor and Celine Alexander-Brown