



INTERPLAST (UK)



INTERPLAST UK 2019 Charity Mission to Islamabad, Pakistan

Hosted by Rawal Dental and General Hospital [RIHS]
*Lehtrar Rd Khanna Dak, Khanna, Islamabad Capital Territory 44000,
Pakistan*

Saturday 31st August - Friday 13th September 2019

Week 1

Mr Charles Viva - Surgeon
Dr Andrea Falvo - Anaesthetist
Viral Parikh - Pharmacist & Translator
Louise Newman - Nurse

Week 2

Mr Charles Viva - Surgeon
Dr Samuel Pambakian - Anaesthetist
Louise Newman - Nurse

On Saturday 31st August the first team left Manchester airport and flew overnight to the new and very modern airport in Islamabad. We were very fortunate to be hosted by the Crown Plaza Hotel so arrived for a buffet breakfast followed by a couple of hours of rest in our wonderful rooms before taking the yellow bag of supplies to the hospital. Rawal Dental and General Hospital was established in 2013 and hosted us as it was easier to access for the patients, we thank the Hospital director and general manager for hosting us and dear Zufiqar who once again organised and mobilised the patients so the mission could go ahead. Rawal



Dental and General hospital is a large hospital built over 4 floors with many department and services including the dental school. It runs within the remit of the city state hospital, known as PIMS. It has a total of 5 theatres. Our patients were cared for in the Paediatric, Female Surgical and Male Orthopaedic wards. It took a little time to get to grips with the layout of the hospital and quite a distance between the allocated wards and theatres but it did mean single sex nursing and care was prioritised. The view from level 3 of Murree and Murgalla hills and the rooftops was mesmerising,

watching the hazy sunsets as the children flew their kites high in the sky, dusk was a special time to sneak 5 minutes at the window.

That first day, being a Sunday, was fairly quiet apart from the 31 patients who had arrived for screening. A quiet hospital was ideal for orientation and unpacking supplies. Zufligar and Zia and their team met us on arrival and following introductions we got straight to screening. Over the mission a huge total of **241 patients were screened** but with so little turning up on the Sunday many were fitted around theatre lists meaning long waits for many families, on the first few days of the mission we were leaving the hospital around 8 - 9 o'clock.



In among new patients to be seen we were so overjoyed to see so many previous patients who had been treated in either 2016, 2017 or both years. To meet them again 3 years on considering they would have travelled many many hours and for most it was too simply just visit and pay their regards. To mention a handful, little Haseeb who is now a grown boy, having previous CL & CP repairs; tiny smiling Aiya arrived with her Uncle following grafts for her extensive neck contracture, Aneesha, having a previous eye graft; Bareera who is now married, for further grafts to her breast and axilla contractures; Huzaiifa, a CP repair; Abbas and his released axilla contracture, Miya, Rashida, Mehveesh, Tasmia, baby Ramin and of course beautiful Tayeba.

She attended with her brother and for the first time had a sense of happiness and confidence about her. We spent as much time as we could with them but it never feels enough. New patients were there to be seen, babies only days old with clefts, too small and undernourished were referred on for next time. Brothers and sisters filled the screening room with household burns and a lot of young adults with childhood fire scarring came for advice, many did not require surgery and creams and SILGEL were provided to help with massage, itchiness and scar appearance. There were some patients seeking aesthetic improvements which we do not do, but we do listen to their story as culturally it holds such significance and that is decided case by case. Toys, colouring pencils were handed out and pen torches, in sacred supplies, were taken back from wide eyed beautiful babes. It is always better to have bigger teams to help with screening to help improve their experience and so there is more time to understand the patients, their families and stories.



In theatres we predominately had access to one theatre. However due to the national holidays we were fortunate to open into two on Thursday, Friday and Saturday which was ideal with the arrival of Professor Hamid Hassan and our second anaesthetist Sam. The team structure was different from previous trips with only Mr Viva present for the whole trip; Andrea and Viral returning to London after one week with work commitments and myself on the second Tuesday to start the Tropical Nursing course. We managed this with scheduling grafts only at the beginning of week one, scheduled the littlest babies and difficult airway cases (including one epileptic man) for the two overlap days where Sam and Andrea were available and day cases for the last day of theatre. A dinosaur sticker system, the larger the dinosaur the trickier the airway was very effective! There were only 3 patients scheduled for theatre that did not arrive, two were cancelled due to abnormal blood tests or swab results and one of those was again a little boy from the previous year for his CL repair.

SURGICAL OPERATIONS AND PROCEDURES

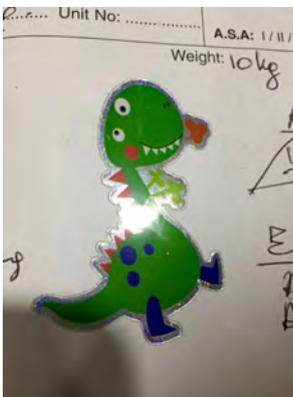
60 operations

Repair Cleft Lip	11
Repair Cleft Palate	12
Revision of Cleft Lip	2
Excision of Lip scar	3
Skin Graft and release of contracture	13
Repair of Hyperspasia	3
Excision of scars	4
Debulking of Keloid	1
Steroid Injections of scars	11

Adults >18 years 17

Children 33

Babies < 1 year 10



Andrea being the first anaesthetist got to grips with the equipment super quickly due to his extensive previous experience and introduced anaesthetic charts and many other international aspects to the staff's practice. He kindly helped out in Urology theatres with a complex patient, as Sam got called to A&E to help intubate in the second week when 3 young adults were involved in a fatal motorbike accident. Different styles, different backgrounds both worked with the theatre assistants and ran theatres wonderfully. The group of theatre assistants pictured here and led by Bilal really worked hard yet this all came at a bargaining price for many selfies! They shared their food with us and we really did enjoy working alongside them.

Darting between all of the wards to check oxygen saturations, temperatures, change dressings, clean brand new cleft lip repairs, inspect new formed palates and then back to theatres and to screening was made so much easier with Viral, the pharmacist, who could translate fluently and made great friends with all the staff. He organised the supplies, helped with the ward discharges and overall running due to his super friendly and happy approach. His presence made such an impact that when he left, it carried over and everything continued to work efficiently and everyone understood what our normal policies and instructions were. Fathers and husbands typically spoke good english and helped us translate to other families. This community feeling was so satisfying to work within. There were four young adults on the ward, Huzaifa, Qasim, Abdul and Faisal who really had a lovely bond over their course of stay and an extremely cheeky young boy, Ghulum, with his Grandad on the children ward that kept us laughing throughout! Because of the distribution of the patients, we did not get a local nursing

team allocated, this meant education was sparse but still friendships were built and wound care was taught. Surprisingly, the workload was actually quite manageable and all got done each day with the patients being so very patient.



Postoperatively we had little recovery support so Sam and Andre factored this in and pain was controlled with oral analgesic medications which we had brought with us on the ward. In addition to their normal roles, as with these trips, Sam and Andrea helped with pre operative work, pre medication and Sam even covered as the ward nurse role following my departure! With some help from an excellent nurse from Holy Family hospital, Sana, they completed the ward care, the graft checks and discharges and closedown amazingly! Thursday, the last day of the mission, was allocated to final graft checks along with a CL + CP outpatient check for those patients who were available to return for a follow up or where staying close to be able to do this. So efficient were these 3 that they managed to take the afternoon as a historical trip out to Taxilla!





Overall surgical complications were minimal. Thankfully the daily electricity cuts usually only lasted 2-3 seconds and on the one occasion it was longer, we only had 1 patient in recovery and the theatre list had been completed. There were nil intra-operative complications but one post operative CP bleed in recovery and a hypospadias repair who needed to return to theatres to re - insert the catheter. All resolved quickly and with no detrimental effect to the patient or the surgical repair. We managed to schedule all grafts within 4-5 days of departure meaning we could at least do one check and all had taken well, with one small

boy having a localised wound infection to his donor site. To the best of our knowledge they continued to do so however follow up information was little in contrast to previous trips. We were made aware of one CP repair that had an immediate small anterior dehiscence which was planned to be reviewed this year but will now be next year.

We were so grateful to Professor Hassan Hamid who came and joined us during the surgical mission for two days and helped on the bigger lists. He is also helping one special patient who we have known for two missions and up to this point been unable to help her with her facial pigmented hairy naevus. We are so grateful for his opinions and strategies to help her with laser treatment. The ongoing work although on pause due to Covid is really promising.



We are also thankful to Professor Hamid and his wife Ahdila for taking us up to viewpoint for a coffee with a starry view of Islamabad City on our first night, the drive up itself was an experience! Professor Naeem of Urology at the hospital and his colleagues hosted us for a Chinese one evening and a long standing friend of Mr Viva, Nasim and his brothers who own a carpet shop in Rawalpindi for a delicious Pakistani dinner. We sadly could not take up all the dinner invitations but were so thankful for the invites and generosity. Zia, a very kind friend of Zufiqar who helped facilitate the mission took us to the Faisal Mosque one evening and we arrived just in time for sunset which was a magnificent light to see the grand Mosque and the mountainous background. We even enjoyed his scenic drive home one day after work!! In between long days and an overall short trip for most these were welcomed experiences to see more of Islamabad. From myself and Viral in particular we thank the Crown Plaza for our 'BD' (twice a day) sweet sweet fresh mangos eaten in our room under the A/C.



Of all the three trips to Pakistan I have been on, despite it being a small team with changeovers, this was one of the most efficient trips. Pakistan as a destination to travel to and work within often puts volunteers off but please take a look over the photos of the patients who we met, treated and the staff we worked alongside.



We wholeheartedly **thank all** the staff at the Rawal General who worked with us and worked tirelessly. We thank Javed, our kind and generous trustee who always helps the missions flow so easily on the ground but we all understand how much work goes in for that to happen, thank you for your assistance with the flights, transport, accommodation and caring for the patients. We continue to be so grateful to UK Towlers Chemist from Kirby Moorside, Tracy Liggins Sales Office Manager for Swann Morton, Pennine healthcare for the suction tubing and Mr Remco Customer Service Manager GC aesthetics (Nagor) for Silgel donations. Thank you to all those who donate non medical gifts, the colouring pencils, books, teddies, toys, clothing and all the gifts we have the pleasure to hand out to the families, we thank you on their behalf. If the pandemic allows we will be aiming to do an Autumn trip next year, 2021 and would be looking for nurses, non medical volunteers, pharmacist, speech and language therapists, anaesthetists and surgeons to join. Our new website will be up and running soon with a new [interplast email account](mailto:interplastuk.org), so please contact us if you are interested in joining on, volunteers@interplastuk.org, cviva@interplastuk.org, louisenewman@interplastuk.org, if you have any questions about this mission or report please let me know on louisenewman@live.co.uk

All patients gave their consent for their photos to be used.