OPERATION HERNIA, GHANA

The Takoradi Team
Marianne, Sandie, Ester, Simon, Frances, Sammy, Linda, Rebecca, Roy, Monica, Michael

We worked at two hospitals. One, Takoradi Hospital, was a district hospital with a rather dilapidated exterior. It is the home of the hernia project and on the second floor there is a converted ward which serves as a reception assessment area, operating theatre and recovery room. The other hospital was the Ghana Port Health Authority (GPHA) Hospital, which is a small semi-private institution run by two doctors, one of whom is the main local instigator of the project and chief medical officer, Dr Bernard Boateng-Duah.

Our first adult clients at GPHA Hospital

We settled on a team of four individuals. The members were myself, from the Department of Surgery at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Simon Maseme, the chief surgeon at Prince Mshyeni Hospital, Linda McKenzie, the theatre matron from Addington Hospital, and the most senior member, Roy Wise, from private practice.

Sponsorship from industry came from Life Care Hospitals, Johnson & Johnson from their Ethicon Division, Perryhill International, who contributed R25 000 to the project, as well as a variety of different mesh products and sutures for use in Ghana worth a similar amount of money. AstraZeneca kindly donated a significant quantity of local anaesthetic.

In the last SAJS we reported that Professor Sandie Thomson had recently taken a small team, including representatives from the ASSA and PAAS, to Ghana, to undertake hernia operations in rural areas. The following are extracts from Professor Thomson’s report on the venture.

The initial request to participate in Operation Hernia, Ghana was through the British Hernia Society from its president, Professor Andrew Kingsnorth. He approached me because of a previous contact we had had when I hosted him as our visitor at the SAGES Annual Gastroenterology Congress several years ago. He also did part of his postgraduate studies in Cape Town.

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