
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

OUTREACH

Recently the Orthopaedic Executive Committee (ExCo) has been approached to help with the orthopaedic management of patients in an area not far from the city centre.

What is OUTREACH and what is our stance on it? I cannot supply all the answers but we can pose some relevant questions.

Definition from *Wiktionary*¹

NOUN

1. *The act or practice of visiting and providing the services (of a charity or other organisation) to people who might not otherwise have access to those services.*
2. *The extent or length of something.*

VERB

1. *To reach further than; to surpass or exceed; to go too far.*
2. *To provide charitable services to people who would otherwise not have access to those services.*

We have a portfolio for OUTREACH on ExCo but what constitutes the need for it?

We know that when one travels more than 100 km from the major centres orthopaedic services deteriorate because of a lack of specialists, trained medical officers, orthopaedic nursing and facilities and because of corrupt management.

With National Health in the offing we need to train more orthopaedically minded medical officers and more specialists to fill the vacant posts in fully equipped facilities.

We are aware of the current instances of OUTREACH facilitated by our members and we are really proud of these. Is there an opportunity for our private members to help at Government facilities? Yes, one can help at clinics, by taking ward rounds, training juniors and with surgery; one just has to obtain permission from the CEO of the specific hospital. Even if one can do this only once a month it will make a very meaningful contribution.

There is also OUTREACH towards Africa where effective systems are in place by training medical officers in our facilities and by helping with congresses and events in African countries.

Remember there is and always will be a need to go out and share one's knowledge and skills.

Reference

1. Wiktionary. A wiki-based Open Content dictionary. [O]. Available: <http://www.wiktionary.org/>. Accessed 17 May 2012.



*Prof TLB le Roux
President: South African Orthopaedic Association*
