



IHPBA Outreach Mission to Bhutan

Report

Bhutan is a small beautiful country with a population of 700,000 (0.7million) people. In spite of being a low-income country, healthcare and education are free. The patients needing advance healthcare are referred outside, either to India or Bangladesh or elsewhere and the cost of treatment is borne by the State. The cost of the medical education is also similarly borne by the state with requirement that doctors who are trained will serve the country for a period of 2-4 years.

Institute

Jigme Dorji Wangchuk National Referral Hospital (JDWNRH) is national referral centre with 350 beds and treats hundreds of patients from all over Bhutan. The hospital has only 3 surgeons who have to take the load of all the surgical problems including emergencies, so 8 operation theatres are busy.

The outreach team comprised of Dr. Avinash Supe, former Dean of KEM Hospital and Secretary General of A-PHPBA, Dr. Thomas vanGulik, Professor, Department of Surgery, Academic Medical Centre UMC and Dr. P. Jagannath, past President of IHPBA.

Programme

Day 1 (26th April'19) - The day started with introduction by Dr. Gosar Pemba, Medical Superintendent, Dr. Tashi Tensing, Dean and other members of the faculty.

Spacious room was earmarked for the Surgical 'Skill Centre' with three workstations, audiovisual aids and desk spaces. Lectures on common problems as desired by the local surgeons :

1. Acute Cholecystitis - Tokyo guidelines Dr.Avinash Supe
2. Safe Cholecystectomy and avoiding bile duct injury – Dr. Avinash Supe
3. Management of bile duct injuries – Dr. Thomas van Gulik

We then had an opportunity to go around the hospital and surgical departments to see patients who had been waiting.

Case Discussion on patients who have complex problems, presented by residents.

Afternoon 2.30

Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr.Lotay Kshering came to inaugurate. President of the University and President of the Hospital with Dr Gosar Pemba and Dr Tashi Tensing were present.



Dr. Lotay Kshering is an endourologist and accomplished surgeon who has an expertise in CBD exploration and ERCPs. In addition to attending to his official duties of Prime Minister



reports to the hospital on every Friday to operate patients and also do the rounds with his resident staff. He is called even now for difficult procedures.

In his words he said his 'first love is surgery'. He tried his hand on the endotrainer and beetles provided by Ethicon. It was fascinating

to see the Prime Minister interacting and encouraging his residents on the basic Laparoscopic skills.



Dr. Jagannath explained the objectives of the IHPBA Foundation – to help capacity building and also assess the requirements of the country and plan step wise assistance in enhancing the surgical skills in HPB surgery.

His Excellency, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Dr. Lotay Kshering welcomed the team.

Dr. Jagannath introduced the team members to him. He thanked the team and IHPBA for all the assistance and extended full support. He also mentioned that they are looking forward to continued collaboration to enhance healthcare for his people and promised all support for the same.

Patient Problems were presented and discussed. 4 patients were then identified for surgery which would have been otherwise referred out of Bhutan for the same. The surgical residents and also gynaec residents had come for the training session.

The team continued to interact with the surgical staff over dinner.

Day 2 (27th April'19)

Started with a talk on biliary strictures by Dr. Thomas vanGulik and then went to ORs for helping local surgeons. Dr Sonam and Karma in surgeries for difficult CBD stones.



We discussed the operative problems which were faced due to lack of some equipments which were suggested and the Thomas retractor systems. The needs would be further identified by Dr. Sonam. After operating on 2 patients, the 3rd patient, an elderly male, insisted that he should be operated with the assistance of the visiting team and so was also scheduled late in evening and Dr Thomas gladly washed up. There was enormous gratitude by the patients and relatives for the help and expertise extended by the IHPBA team.

Day closed with interactive talks on liver anatomy, basics of liver resection and pancreatic SOL, by Dr. Jagannath. The residents were eager till late in the evening and wanted more such interactions.

In the evening the surgeons expressed their desire to be part of IHPBA and in knowing the benefits of membership. The planning for the next outreach was informally discussed over dinner.

Day 3 (28th April'19) (Cleaning Day of the hospital)

All post-operative cases were seen by Thomas and are doing well. It also happens to be the day in which all doctors including the Medical Superintendent, helped the nurses to clean the wards and set an example and explain the principle of hygiene to the patients.

On the whole the programme was extremely satisfying for teaching, training and also clinical care. We felt that this is an excellent initiative and needs to be continued in a step wise programme.

Bhutan outreach needs support to equip the hospital with good technologies.

We need basic laparoscopic sets, head lamps, retractor systems, good instruments for open surgery. It's a country which believes in Gross National Happiness and the Prime Minister (a surgeon) want to modernize the healthcare.