From the International Surgery Desk

**Vision**

To facilitate international surgery activity within the Department, including an educational component in all projects, and collaborate with like-minded disciplines and colleagues within the McMaster University and Canadian surgical communities.

We want to hear about your activities – many within the Department have long experience with international work. Other faculty and residents want to get involved but aren’t sure how. We hope to network experience with enthusiasm, and offer links and opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills necessary for international surgery.

Brian Cameron, MD, FRCSC, FACS
Associate Professor, Pediatric Surgery

**International Surgery Survey**

Thank you to those who responded...

- 39% (133/340) responded to the survey, including 65 faculty and 56 residents.
- 79% of respondents are interested in taking part in international surgery activities at McMaster.
- 63% of faculty and 82% of trainees have had international medical experience as students, residents or staff, including 30% (36) within the past 5 years in 33 different countries.
- The most common benefits identified were personal fulfillment, professional collaboration, and knowledge sharing.

- A majority of Faculty agreed or strongly agreed that the Department should:
  - support international surgery activity (88%)
  - offer merit points to faculty undertaking international surgery activities (75%)
  - encourage residents who want to do international surgery electives (83%)
  - and designate funds for that purpose (60%)
  - make short-term position(s) available for surgical trainees from LMICs to do electives at McMaster (74%)
  - and designate funds for international surgery research projects (62%)

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**Update:**

**Bethune Round Table 2010**

The 10th Annual Bethune Round Table on International Surgery was held in Calgary from May 14-15, 2010. There were approximately 150 attending the two-day event. Surgeons from a dozen countries including India, the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya and Laos presented papers covering a broad range of surgical education, technology and clinical care issues. One RCT compared ultrasound guided needle aspiration versus surgical draining for breast abscesses in Uganda; another evaluated the results of evidence-based obstetrical practices in Ukraine. There were four papers with links to McMaster. Abstracts will be published in the Canadian Journal of Surgery. Next year’s BRT meeting will take place in Montreal (see www.ucalgary.ca/ois.bethune).

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**Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Trauma Team**

“The Trauma Team Training (TTT) program is a low-cost, team-oriented course developed by CNIS for medical staff taking care of injured patients in resource-limited settings. The Guyana Ministry of Health has adopted the TTT as the national training standard for physicians, nurses, and para-medical staff. Julia Pemberton, research coordinator with the McMaster Pediatric Surgery Research Collaborative, and I have been evaluating the program effectiveness in collaboration with surgeons in Guyana. We have evaluated 47 course participants with multiple-choice tests, skills evaluation checklists, and assessments of teams’ management of mock trauma scenarios. Preliminary results reveal that TTT participants’ knowledge improves after the course and that retention of skills is encouraging. Interviews demonstrate improved comfort and confidence with treating injured patients. Dr. Maggie Gordon, PGY5, General Sur-

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**Other international surgery websites:**

- www.internationalsurgery.ubc.ca/
- www.cnis.ca/
- www.ucalgary.ca/ois
- www.utoronto.ca/ois
- www.cags-accg.ca/

**Upcoming Events...**

- CNIS Instructor Courses (Ottawa, October 2010)
- October 21, 2010: SOO (Structured Operative Obstetrics)
- October 22-23, 2010: ESS (Essential Surgical Skills)
Experiences in International Surgery...

“Operation Smile—Dr. Short Term Medical Trip Bolivia February 2010

“Last August I was the first plastics resident to be able to take advantage of a newly approved 2 week international elective opportunity. I went to Bha-
vangar, India with Operation Smile. With a surgical team of 40 volunteers we operated on 112 children with burns and cleft lip and palates. The team was highly international as we worked alongside surgeons and nurses from 9 other countries in 4 languages. Cooperation, camaraderie, and sharing of techniques and ideas made the time an excellent surgical learning experience.

My time in India was a highlight of my training and showed me the great good we can do in areas that have no access to reconstructive plastic surgery. This short two weeks guaranteed that I am now dedicated to continue working with organizations to provide surgical care in poverty stricken areas for the rest of my career”.

Ukraine. While you approach these trips with a heart to give, you always come home having been greatly enriched in a way that far outweighs what you have given. I am looking forward to an upcoming trip this summer to Ukraine where I will have an opportunity to apply my surgical and pediatric skills in a variety of settings where medical care is desperately lacking. I encourage everyone to look for opportunities to give back to others in need both locally and abroad!”

Dr. Karen Bailey, Assistant Professor, Pediatric General Surgery

Trauma Research in India: Bridging a National Chasm

By 2030, road traffic accidents are anticipated to rank in the top 3 of all-cause disability behind depressive disorders and ischemic heart disease. An unprecedented increase in the number of vehicles has outpaced the development of adequate roads and highways. For example, India has one percent of the motor vehicles in the world, but bears the burden of six percent of the global vehicular accidents.

Dr. Bhandari, Division of Orthopaedic Surgery, has spent the last 5 years developing critical collaborations in India to facilitate the exchange of ideas and research expertise. To this end, he co-founded the Indian Society for Research in Orthopaedics (ISRO) with prominent Indian Orthopaedic Surgeons with the aim to conduct meaningful, high quality clinical trauma trials in India.

Dr. Mohit Bhandari, Associate Professor, Orthopaedic Surgery

Dr. Stephen Foster Receives Prestigious Royal College Humanitarian Award

Dr. Stephen Foster, Associate Clinical Professor with McMaster University’s Department of Surgery, was the 2010 recipient of the RCPSC Teasdale-Corti Humanitarian Award. The Award recognizes the efforts of a Canadian physician that go above and beyond the norm and “exemplify altruism and integrity, courage and perseverance in the alleviation of human suffering”.

For nearly 40 years and often at great personal risk, Dr. Foster has continued to provide high-quality medical treatment in Angola, a country devastated by decades of civil war and where the average life expectancy is 46.6 years. Dr. Foster founded and currently serves as Medical Director of the 46-bed Centro Evangelico de Medicina do Lubango, which opened in 2006 and serves an area population of over one million.

(rpcsc.medical.org/multimedia)