

Friends Of Fiji Heart Foundation Paediatric Heart Mission

1st – 12th September 2014 at Lautoka Hospital, Fiji.

Introduction: For more than 20 years Fiji has benefitted tremendously from annual visits by the Open Heart International team to Suva. In 2007, Friends of Fiji Heart Foundation team launched its first visit to Lautoka Hospital to provide similar services. In 2014, for the first time, the team included a Paediatric team to operate on Fijian children with cardiac disease, mostly congenital heart lesions, hence, realizing a dream that was hatched in a golf course in Auckland.

Objectives:

- To provide diagnostic echo screening for Fijian children.
- To provide surgical repair mostly for congenital heart lesions where a single corrective operation is anticipated and selected valvular heart lesions, particularly where transfer overseas may be of high risk.

Whom:

- Dr Kirsten Finucane - Paediatric Cardiac Surgeon
- Dr John Wright – Paediatric Cardiologist
- Dr Brent McSharry – Paediatric Intensivist
- Other members of the team included anaesthetists, perfusionist, PICU nurses, Ward nurses and other support staff
- **Local Team:**
Dr Tieri Waqanicakau – Paediatric Registrar
Dr Donna Mokoroa - Paediatric Intern
S/N Ana Ramaka – Clinic Nurse

Funding: Various charities through Friends of Fiji Open Heart Team.

Activities:

a) Cardiac Surgery: 3 from Suva Colonial War Memorial Hospital, 9 from Lautoka Hospital.

Types of cases operated	Number
Tetralogy of Fallot (including a 27 year old with pulmonary stenosis and ASD)	4
VSD	2
Sub-aortic Stenosis	1
PDA	2
TAPVD	1
Mitral stenosis	1
Pericardial window	1
Total:	12

b) Local Consultations:

- 13 yr old with ectopic atrial tachycardia – team assisted with managing this very complicated life-threatening arrhythmia. This child is now discharged on anti-arrhythmic medication and worked up to go to NZ for electrophysiology study and radio frequency ablation through ROMAC funding.
- 6 yr old Kiribati girl with tetralogy of Fallot and frequent tet spells plus severe cyanosis down to oxygen saturation of 52%. This child was en route to India for repair of TOF. She was funded by ROMAC for surgery in Starship accompanied by team doctor.

b) Echocardiogram clinics: extra-ordinary echo clinics booked for Monday 8/9/2014 and Tuesday 9/9/2014. In addition, 5 new inpatient echocardiograms done.

c) Diagnostic Echocardiograms:

- Intra-operative: 9
- Post-operative: 11
- Clinic review: 16

Outcome:

- All surgeries went very well.
- The majority of cases (9/12) were discharged within the first week post-surgery. Due to social circumstances, the last child was discharged 2 weeks later, more to ensure good nutrition. Overall, there were no significant untoward events during operation and immediate post-operative period.
- Evaluation and family counseling for baby with tricuspid atresia by Dr Wright.
- One child with life-threatening arrhythmia successfully managed.
- Safe transfer of Kiribati child with TOF to Auckland, NZ, for surgery.
- Upskilling of local doctors in caring for post-cardiac patients.

Acknowledgements:

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1. Dr Kirsten Finucane and Dr John Wright and the New Zealand Paediatric Heart team
2. Friends of Fiji Heart Foundation team
3. Mr Deepak Tahal and Trustees of Friends of the Pacific Foundation
4. Lautoka Hospital Management
5. Paediatric Department staff
6. Eric Horne and Geoff Dainty in their personal capacity as Present and Past Chairman of ROMAC (Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children), New Zealand.
7. Donors and supporters

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