

Editorial

The St Mary's Hospital, Isle of Wight, UK – Juba Teaching Hospital, Southern Sudan Link

The St Mary's Hospital, IW-JTH Link was established in November 2007 by healthcare professionals at the respective hospitals with the overall objective "To promote understanding of the needs and to support the Government of Southern Sudan in order to improve clinical services through the development of education and training."

The Link is multiprofessional and dedicated to developing education and training. So far we have undertaken a fact-finding visit in March 2008, followed by 2 further visits, each by 4 experienced trainers in October 2008 and March 2009. In addition, 2 of our trainee doctors have spent 4 months at Juba Teaching Hospital and 2 medical students undertook one month's elective.

What then are our observations so far? The most obvious feature is the severe shortage of highly skilled healthcare professionals in Southern Sudan. There are clearly many able doctors and nurses working in and committed to Southern Sudan and there is a visible thirst for knowledge and learning. Critically however there is not yet a general culture of education and training.

The achievement of this culture of education and training requires, in my opinion, the creation and development of certain institutions to support and promote it. There need to be active Schools of Nursing and Midwifery in Southern Sudan giving recognised and validated qualifications. The doctors need to feel they can develop their careers in structured postgraduate educational programmes. A culture of learning is also greatly enhanced by the visible presence of an undergraduate medical school and university. Furthermore, there is a need for the professional regulatory bodies, such as a General Medical and Dental Council to ensure standards and quality of care.

A quality local publication such as the Southern Sudan Medical Bulletin also has a major role in the development of education. Not only is it a source of information and continuing professional development but it should encourage local healthcare professionals to undertake studies into local problems with a view to publication. This enables better understanding of local disease patterns and needs, promotes skills in scientific methodology and reasoning, enhances presentation skills, develops critical analysis and nearly always improves career prospects.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage especially the younger doctors and other professionals working in Southern Sudan to get involved with the Southern Sudan Medical Bulletin and to undertake studies, however small, into local health problems. The Editors can help with advice and will look sympathetically upon submissions for publication.

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Project Lead for the Juba Link

The **Southern Sudan Medical Bulletin (SSMB)** is a quarterly publication intended for Healthcare Professionals working in the Southern Sudan or those Healthcare Professionals in other parts of the world seeking information on health in the Southern Sudan.

It aims to offer education and information in all specialities and identify research that will inform the development of Health Services in the Southern Sudan. We plan to include reports of original research, critical/systematic reviews, case reports, clinical photographic materials, obituaries, letters to the Editor, use of drugs, medical news of public interest, nutrition matters, public health issues and stories of the health services in the Southern Sudan in the past.

The Bulletin is a publication of the St Mary's Juba link. It is published in mid-February, May, August and November and is free online at <http://www.iow.nhs.uk/juba> (under journals).

We encourage readers to print copies and pass them to colleagues.

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