New: Our Neurosurgical Mission Video

Thanks to the generosity of one of our donors, we recently created a five-minute video showing conditions in Tanzania in vivid detail. The video, including footage shot during our 2016 mission trip, shows just how desperate the conditions are in all areas of the hospital, from waiting rooms to operating rooms to recovery rooms. You’ll see our patients close up, but most importantly you will see our success stories. You’ll drop in on our weekly Skype calls between teams in New York and Tanzania, and watch us conducting our annual neurotrauma course, which offers classroom training to hundreds of African health care providers.

We are making a big difference with very limited resources. Please take five minutes to watch the video, and consider making a donation to support and expand our very important work to improve the lives of African patients.

Mission in Tanzania: 2017 Update, From Dr. Roger Härtl

The annual neurosurgical mission trip to Tanzania took place this year during the week of October 16. For the fourth year in a row, the weeklong trip started with several days of intensive classroom instruction, the Hands-On Neurosurgery, Neurotrauma, and Critical Care Course in Dar es Salaam. The course is an international collaboration led by Dr. Roger Härtl of Weill Cornell Medicine and the local neurosurgical team led by Dr. Hamisi Shabani from the Muhimbili Orthopedic and Neurosurgical Institute. A faculty of 14 (neurosurgeons, a neuro-intensivist, a physician assistant, and a nurse practitioner) gathered from around the globe: Weill Cornell Medicine and Vanderbilt University in the United States, and neurosurgical departments from Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, Uganda, and Pakistan. This year the team included Dr. Philip E. Stieg, professor and chairman of Weill Cornell Medicine Neurological Surgery and Neurosurgeon-in-Chief of New York-Presbyterian Hospital Weill Cornell.

More than 100 attended the course, including local medical students and specialists aspiring to improve neurosurgery and neurocritical care in East Africa. The team was honored to be joined by Dr. Tariq Khan from the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies (WFNS), who spoke about the importance of building neurosurgical training capacity in the developing world.

Even as didactic sessions were going on, neurosurgeons who were serving as faculty started evaluating patients for surgery. The end of the week was dedicated to surgical procedures that included stabilization for cervical spinal trauma, the removal of a large frontal skull base tumor, and several pediatric conditions (see next page).

In accordance with the mission, operating days focused on training. Dr. Härtl instructed the local faculty in performing minimally invasive spinal surgery with locally available equipment.

Dr. Härtl hopes that these efforts will over time improve patient outcomes and serve as a model for other hospitals and programs.

For more information please see our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/TanzaniaNeurosurgeryProject/

Help support our ongoing work. Make a donation today at weillcornellbrainandspine.org/tanzania

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Top: Dr. Christoph Wippinger (left, using drill) and Dr. Härtl train local surgeons to perform a laminectomy and fusion in a patient with cervical spine trauma. Above: Dr. Philip Stieg trains the surgical team to remove a skull base tumor.

Mission in Tanzania
2017 Update, From Dr. Roger Härtl

A TANZANIAN COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM NEUROSURGICAL EDUCATION

ABOUT THE WEILL CORNELL NEUROSURGERY PROGRAM IN TANZANIA

The Neurosurgical Mission in Tanzania, now in its ninth year, is conducted in collaboration with the Foundation for International Education in Neurological Surgery (FIENS) and consists of several components:

1. Our multidisciplinary teams of surgeons, anesthesiologists, nurses, and biomedical engineers train local health care providers to deliver basic neurological care using locally available equipment and resources. We are doing “hands-on” training of doctors in Tanzania, empowering them with a high level of expertise in the management of neurological disorders and neurosurgical procedures. Providing the highest level of surgical training to these eager, talented surgeons impacts every other level of care—nursing, anesthesia, intensive care treatment, and general ward care. Setting the bar high encourages a positive response and team effort involving all areas.

2. Promising African surgeons are selected for short-term observational fellowships at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York. The purpose of this fellowship is to provide motivated surgeons firsthand experience with high-level surgical care. The close working relationship also greatly facilitates the communication between the Weill Cornell Medicine team in New York and the MOI surgeons once the surgeon has returned to Tanzania.

3. Every year a neurosurgery meeting is organized with international faculty in East Africa that combines lectures, practical workshops, and even live surgeries. Surgeons and nurses from many African countries participate.

4. Weekly conference calls and Skype conferences are held between the Weill Cornell team and their colleagues at MOI to discuss challenging cases, patient management, and ongoing research.

5. An IRB-approved database for traumatic brain and spinal injury has been implemented at MOI to monitor patient care and ensure quality. This and previous projects have led to several publications in peer-reviewed journals.

6. Each year we fund one European or North American neurosurgeon to live and work in Tanzania for 12 months. This year’s fellow is Dr. Andreas Leidinger, a fully trained neurosurgeon from Spain.

Dr. Härtl hopes that these efforts will over time improve patient outcomes and serve as a model for other hospitals and programs.

From Dr. Roger Härtl

Top: Dr. Christoph Wippinger (left, using drill) and Dr. Härtl train local surgeons to perform a laminectomy and fusion in a patient with cervical spine trauma. Above: Dr. Philip Stieg trains the surgical team to remove a skull base tumor.
A Vision of the Future

A new era in health care is coming to Tanzania...