



INTERPLAST UK
ANNUAL MEETING OF TRUSTEES
WEDNESDAY 18 JANUARY 2012

ANNUAL REPORT

Reflecting on the last 12 months there have been two mission trips to Pakistan and Uganda, where we have previously engaged in medical camps and continue to develop and strengthen our working relationships.

In January Mr Viva took a team of 11 members to work in Holy Family Hospital in Rawalpindi, alongside Prof Hamid Hassan and his staff who were extremely keen to avail themselves of the techniques and procedures Mr Viva used. We were also joined by an Orthodontist from Karachi. In the formal welcome ceremony, there were expressions of overwhelming gratitude for Mr Viva's tireless efforts for "helping suffering humanity" and it was noted that this was his 8th camp in Pakistan with a total of over 700 patients having been treated. One specific message we were asked to convey on our return was that "we are a peace loving nation" and the staff and patients with whom we engaged certainly demonstrated this. Telemedicine enabled consultation via video link and avoided unnecessary journeys for patients. Professor Hassan and his team had done an amazing job in preparing and screening patients presenting with a wide range of conditions, including a number of patients with acid burns with whom there is now instant recognition as they have received treatment on our previous visits. Whilst daily operating sessions continued a constant flow of out patients would arrive for consultation. Somehow all the patients were seen between theatre cases or during "coffee breaks" etc. Every minute was utilised to maximise the opportunities of treating as many patients as possible. A total of 120 patients underwent surgical procedures during the

two weeks' Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Workshop which benefited both patients and staff.

Once again, with the enthusiastic support and liaison of Elspeth Robinson, Mr Viva was invited to take a team to Kumi Hospital in October. The team consisted of 10 people. Comparing the findings of our previous visit there were only very minimal improvements in hospital conditions. It was satisfying to see that the theatre equipment we had provided was being well used and enabled us to proceed without having to adapt antiquated machines. The paediatric ward was being decorated and upgraded using a designated gift but the ward accommodating our patients was in desperate need of maintenance. It was disturbing to see that not all the patients had the use of a mosquito net unlike the situation in 2009; we therefore provided a few. Open fires for cooking in the hospital grounds are now forbidden thereby improving the hazardous, smoke-filled atmosphere. Cooking by families is carried out in a large barn-like structure on stoves made from termite hill mud. However, power supply and road conditions leave a lot to be desired with frequent power cuts and dangerous tracks a daily encounter. The hospital itself has faced management problems over recent years and staff have not been paid on occasions. Poverty continues to be widespread making the children and elderly vulnerable to disease and infection. There were many sad stories and complicated cases but in spite of their continuous struggles the Ugandan people remain joyful and exercise great faith. Thankfully, many patients received the gift of free surgery which would potentially transform their lives. Meanwhile, in the Maternity Department conjoined twins were born, a phenomenon rarely seen especially in Kumi. They were transferred to a hospital nearer to Kampala but their future would remain very uncertain as survival would require access to specialist health care and constant support. It was extremely rewarding when visiting surrounding villages, to meet up with Norah, a 72 years old lady who received repair of her cleft lip in 2009. She came and knelt at Mr Viva's feet and hugged him, an expression of her gratitude for the life changing surgery she had received. The Norah we met two years ago was withdrawn and timid but now she was very sociable and openly expressed her feelings. What a transformation! During our time at Kumi, Mr Viva, being the only Surgeon on the team, completed 50 operations.

Financial support continues to trickle in mainly through Trustees, team members, friends and contacts with invitations to speak about the charity to various organisations. We are also indebted to some pharmaceutical companies for essential provisions. Overall, our thanks and appreciation go to Mr Viva without whose motivation and inspiration Interplast (UK) would not be a reality.