**Bardai Brief**

News from

Mark & Andrea Hotchkin

**DECEMBER 2017**



Dear All

We have been back in Bardai for a couple of weeks and are enjoying the pleasant temperatures, currently a nice and sunny 260C by day falling to a chilly 110C by night. Our sleeping bag keeps us warm and when it gets colder we will move from our thatched wall and roof shelter into our stone built mud roofed room which will retain the heat.

We thank God for an easy trip to Chad. There were doubts about all our luggage including 2 trunks of medical equipment and a small 12v fridge getting on to the plane, but that went really smoothly and then at Ndjamena once customs knew that we were the doctors that previously worked at Guinebor, courtesy of the baggage porter, we were waved through.

5 days later Mark flew up to Bardai with the dental team from the USA and then spent a week working with them learning some basic dentistry, i.e. how to pull out teeth that are causing problems. They have been coming to Chad for many years and were on the 4th trip to Bardai, so the clinic opened the next day in the language centre and they were able to treat 25 plus patients a day. There are really a staggering number of broken and decayed teeth, all the dates they eat and sugary drinks, very sweet tea and coca cola can’t help.

Mark got plenty of practice under the expert supervision of Kevin and Erika. They left a set of instruments, including a dental drill/saw and plenty of supplies so that we can set up a dental clinic in the hospital.

Andrea came up on the flight 6 days later that would take the dental team back down to Ndjamena, and we have now set up home. She was able to bring a replacement water pump. Scott, our interim team leader in Ndjamena drills wells so was the ideal person to find a good one at short notice. It was fitted by Brian a multi-talented support logistics worker with the dental team who took a morning off from washing and sterilising dental instruments. All this before we had chance to run out of water stored in our drums.

We started work at the hospital last Monday morning, 8am till 2pm. We arrive as the team are having breakfast for a quiet start to the day when they finish. There are not many patients and they are slow to arrive due to the cold mornings, but there is plenty to do and we can thank God that the new team are really making an effort. There is a new set of nurses, an X-ray/ultrasound technician and a pharmacist. Thankfully the medical director is still the same, and his enthusiasm to serve and learn seems to have rubbed off on the whole team which, although small, seems much more motivated than before.

Whilst we were away Dr Abdul Kerim had performed an amputation on a man who had stepped on a land mine, which is really encouraging as it made our previous work setting things up worthwhile. However, nothing had been done to keep things ready for the next time. Andrea set to work organising sterile supplies and getting the operating theatres ready for use again. Unfortunately, the hospital generators are failing and cannot supply enough energy for the autoclave or the yet unused X-ray equipment. We can sterilise metal instruments in a dry heat oven, but gowns, sheets and swabs are difficult in small unreliable pressure cookers. We are going to borrow a larger pressure cooker from Ndjamena, hopefully arriving on a MAF flight for the European union delegation due soon.

Surprisingly we have been busy in the operating theatre, Andrea giving

anaesthetics and Mark operating on the Tuesday, looking after a young child with a bad facial burn, a man with an extensive leg burn and another with a severe face and neck infection. Just as we finished an emergency came in, a man with bad facial wounds from hitting a windscreen, (seatbelts are rarely used here). The new monitoring equipment that we bought has been put to good use. Today we used one of the chest drains that we bought from the UK to drain 2 litres of pus from around a young man’s lung, it was great to have the proper kit not to have to improvise. Mark has also extracted teeth for 3 patients. It has been an encouraging first week back.

The satellite internet at the centre is working very well, it has even been possible to have ‘what’s app’ calls with Ruth and Rebecca. The town’s telephone is also working well and we have been able to keep in touch with our families in England.

**PRAYER POINTS:**

* **The hospital energy supply and that we can get a good solution for sterilisation.**
* **Developing good relationships at the hospital with opportunities to teach and improve services.**
* **Progress in learning Tedaga, our language helper is still not back in town.**
* **Ruth and Rebecca studying in England.**
* **Continued good health for Marks Mum, Dad and sister**

***NB please feel free to use this in your fellowships but don’t reproduce it electronically or publish it on the net.***

Bardai Brief: December 2017