

This Month I have completed Six Months at Chang Gung memorial Hospital in Taiwan, and when I look back to this short journey, I see how things have changed for me, and I thought of sharing that with you all.

My trip began with acceptance from the department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery at CGMH to train me for two years considering the dire need for this service back home , I was really delighted with this decision, the only obstacles was finding a fund, since it's a self-sponsored Fellowship, nevertheless, with the support of the family by sacrificing some valuable goods, and help of good will people in Interface Uganda, I could manage to travel and sustain myself for the first 6 months, to you all, am really grateful.

As I have mentioned earlier my first 3 months were in Burns and General Plastic Surgery Division, where I have been introduced to the basics of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, management of Burns ICU patients, how to observe early signs of Infection and compartment syndrome, and how to handle different dressings, and to do debridement and Split thickness skin grafts, and worthmentioning management of old scars contractures, it was an amazing journey indeed.

Moreover I have been following most of the Consultants in their Operation days and OPD Clinics, where they have introduced me to management of contracture with flaps and full thickness skin grafts, and how to follow patients thereafter.

In General plastic rotation , I knew how to put in the scars and suture in different parts of the body, plus the basics of the Aesthetics units, it was amazing indeed.

Iam currently in the Trauma Plastic Surgery for 4 months, where Iam going to finish in one month time, I have to say Trauma team is the most young, energetic and diverse group in the hospital, most of the attendings have finished their training less than 10 years back, so they strive for knowledge and excellence.

Trauma here is NO JOKE, as they receive large volume of upper and lower limb injuries, as well as facial trauma, it's the biggest center for TRAUMA in TAIWAN.

The range of injuries is composed of Upper Limbs, where re-implanation for amputated limbs take place, plus the tissue coverage for open fractures, where a wide range of local, regional and free tissue flaps techniques are used efficiently, and Iam doing my best to absorb everything.

On other hand the Lower Limb injuries, which are real challenge for Plastic Surgeon, is handled successfully here, with a wide range of innovative techniques, some of them the center has introduced international community of practice and the results have been published.

And on other hand a lot of patients are dealt with in Elective lists as delayed reconstruction which are handled spacely, which is tricky part sometime, as you have to give the tissue its time to take a final shape.

I was greatly helped by the staff to watch and help in these cases, and one of the good things is that, with the help of Interface uganda, I have bought a custom made surgical LOUPE – don't laugh at my PHOTO please -, with good advice from my good friend Dr. Andrew Hodges, who is a good man, a great surgeon in the least developed part of the world with the most need for such skills, it was a great addition to me, and it helps me to gear up my skills and understanding of flaps dissection and inset.

We use to see patients during follow up, in the general ward or the MICRO-ICU which is a real innovation that helped the success rate of Free Flaps at CGMH to be one of the highest in the world, it contains 32 beds !!.

On the other hand I am trying to learn Micro skills step by step, during helping different attendings as well as in the LAB where there's one big Lab over here.

I have been given some ideas to publish some of the cases we experience, and I think I will work on some papers, as it will be a very important thing to work on.

After I finish Trauma Plastic within 6 weeks time, and I will move to Microsurgical team where I will spend 4 months with focus on Head & Neck reconstruction and Breast and then to Craniofacial team where I will be introduced to Cleft Surgery as well as Orthognatic Surgery plus Facial Trauma, hope I will make use of these skills in the future.

I am confident that, towards the end of my training I will gain most of the skills that will help me to establish a very dire needed service back home, though still I will need help from time to time, as you can never master everything in such a short period of training.

One of the problems I am facing now is the financial constrains, which is really pressing, as in addition the the daily needs, I have special dietary needs that makes my budget is critically low, and I don't know how I am going to sustain the coming 18 Months of my training, which are the most important for me as I need to devote all my time to training, but I always believe I am here for a great cause, and the world is full of good people who are always willing to help, and I am quite confident I will make it at the end of the day for my people and country.

With best regards,

Mohamed Abdelrahman,

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