

Report on Mwanza Paediatric Surgical Outreach:

A MoH, CCBRT, KCMC, and KCCO Childhood Cataract Surgery Initiative

The 8th pediatric ophthalmology surgical outreach was held at Sekou Toure Regional Hospital in Mwanza Region from November 8th -19, 2010. The team from CCBRT and KCCO arrived a day before and was received at the airport by the Region Eye Care Coordinator (REC) while the KCMC team joined the following week.

The clinic started Monday morning and was preceded by a visit to the Regional Medical Officer (RMO). After a brief introduction, the RMO affirmed that the project, though very expensive, was an important one. It serves more than 14 million people around the Lake zone and a lot of children who otherwise would have not received any specialized care now receive it. He thanked all partners who are involved in making the project a reality. He also invited partners to help him to lobby for a candidate to apply for the ophthalmology residency programme then work in Mwanza Region. He welcomed the team and wished a good stay in Mwanza. The team from CCBRT, KCCO and KCMC who joined the local staff at Sekou Toure Hospital were as follows:

Name	Title	Affiliation
Dr Andrew Blaikie	Pediatric ophthalmologist	CCBRT
Dr Hemed Kilima	Fellow in pediatric ophthalmology	CCBRT
Dr Lee Woodward	Pediatric ophthalmologist	KCMC
Dr. Godfrey Furahini	Fellow in pediatric ophthalmology	KCMC
Khamisi Nyihirani	Anesthetist	CCBRT
Yusta	Nurse	CCBRT
Lidya Mhoja	Nurse	CCBRT
Lidya Kiwelu	Optometrist/low vision specialist	CCBRT
Oscar	Community outreach coordinator	CCBRT
Elizabeth Kishiki	Childhood Blindness & Low Vision Coordinator	KCCO

Dr Blaikie and Kilima covered the first week and Dr Woodward and Dr. Furahini covered the second week. The team was supported by the MoH Sekou Toure staff that included 2 anesthetists, 3 eye nurses, 2 optometrists and 2 office assistants. The Regional Eye Coordinator (REC), Lucas Kaji and the coordinator from KCCO oversaw the logistics. The REC also attended adults in the outpatient clinic. There were also two people (Margreet and Telemans) from CCBRT's Communication Unit taking case photos. The team worked well in making sure that children with eye problems received good quality service.

The clinic was very busy during the first week. More children and parents showed up in the first two days of the second week. Wednesday of the second week was a public holiday; however the team agreed to continue with the work to finish the long theatre list.

All children on the pre and post operation list together with their care taker were accommodated in the new psychiatric wards at Sekou Toure Hospital and were using the mattress from the pediatric ward (under renovation).

A total of 450 children were screened, of whom 25% needed surgical interventions. 55 children from previous surgical outreach came for follow up services (refraction, low vision services). During the two weeks 107 surgeries were done and 30 children were sent to CCBRT, KCMC, Ocean Roan and Bugando Medical Centre for further management. Theatre work started on the second day of the outreach and continued until Friday, 19 June. Like previous outreach programmes, medical services, food, and transport were provided free of charge to the patients.

Summary of patients attended the outreach clinic

Paediatric cataract				Other paediatric cases		Total Screened		
Bilateral	Unilateral	Boys	Girls	Follow up	Others	Boys	Girls	Total
25	29	37	17	55	341	379	171	450
Total children who needed surgical intervention		Surgeries done (eyes) at Sekou Toure Hospital			Referrals (children)			
Boys	Girls	Cataract	Others	Total	CCBRT	KCMC	B.M.C *	OR*
69	38	71	36	107	22	3	2	3

*B.M.C. Bugando Medical Centre.

*OR. Ocean Road Hospital

A total of 68 children were prescribed glasses during the outreach. 46% went home with their prescribed spectacles while the remaining 54% were for high power, bifocal or needed plastic lenses and baby frames. These were sent to CCBRT and the optometrist in CCBRT agreed to do follow up to make sure that they are ready and be sent to Mwanza as soon as possible. Parents were told to come back to Sekou Toure at the end of December for their glasses.

Regions where children came from

Region	Congenital/developmental cataract		Other cases	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Kagera	3	0	9	7
Kigoma	0	0	2	1
Mara	3	6	11	8
Mwanza	21	9	202	129
Shinyanga	8	1	15	4
Tabora	1	2	3	3
Dodoma	0	0	0	1
Dar es salaam	0	0	1	0
TOTAL	36	18	243	153

Recommendations:

1. Similar to previous visits, many surgeries were done during this outreach and there were many referrals. Planning for more days for the next outreach should be considered.
2. Many children with allergies (48%) were screened during this outreach, indicating that they came directly to Mwanza without being managed by their REC; there is a need to revise our promotion message to encourage parents to take their children to their REC or district eye coordinator (DEC) for screening prior to coming to Mwanza for the paediatric outreach.
3. Tigo (a cell phone company) sent a short message to its customers in regions around the Lake Zone informing them about the Mwanza paediatric outreach. This proved to be very effective in reaching many people. This could be considered in the future however, the message should be very clear and specific.
4. There continues to be no ophthalmologist in Mwanza (second largest city in Tanzania). This needs to be rectified.
5. Thanks to CCBRT for organizing and making it possible for some children to go back home with their prescribed glasses. For the next outreach high power lenses and bifocal lenses could be added as they can be fixed at Sekou Toure as well.

We are grateful to the RMO's office in Mwanza Region, the administration office of Sekou Toure Regional Hospital and hospital staff for their hospitality, cooperation and dedication to the work. We are also thankful to Tigo for their support to the CCBRT team and on promotion activities; to the Lions Club Mwanza for their contribution toward patient food during the outreach. Finally, many thanks for support from the Johnson Foundation (through Seva Canada) for this important work.



The next outreach has been planned for 13-24 June 2011.

Report by Elizabeth Kishiki
Childhood Blindness and Low Vision Coordinator, KCCO