

Dr.M.L.Wright

Am Sandberg 20
34253 Lohfelden
Tel. privat 0561/516608
E-Mail m.wright@gmx.net

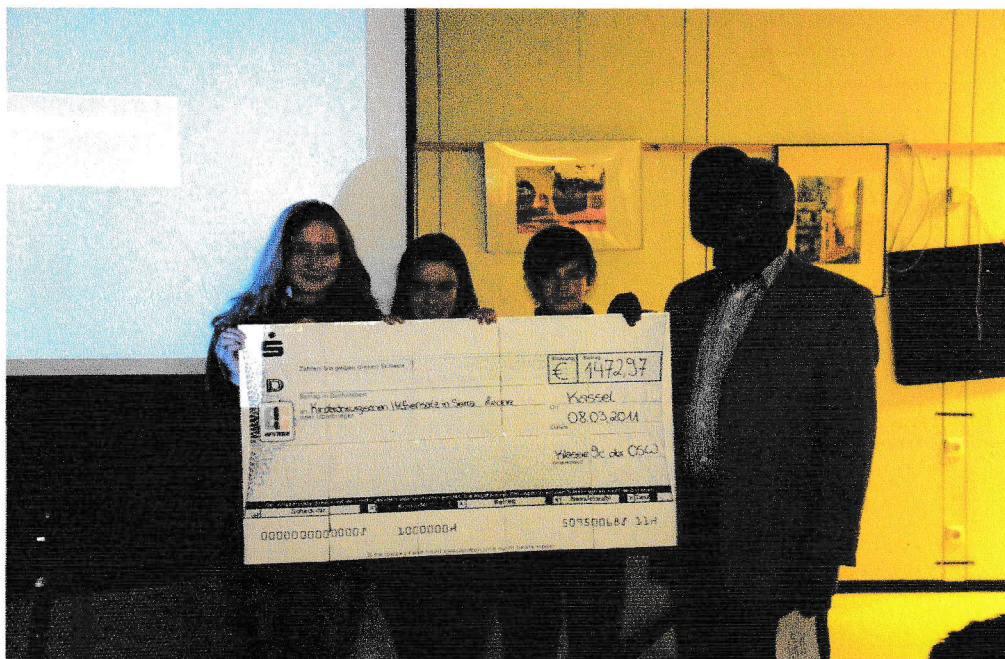
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Report on visit of a team of doctors comprising two german paediatric surgeons Dr. Ibrahim Al-Naieb, Dr. Tilman Gresing, plastic surgeon Dr. Volker Dreimann and paediatrician Dr. Morley Wright to Sierra Leone from 5th. To 19th. May 2011 .

The visit was a sequela to the previous visit of the surgical team to Sierra Leone in March 2010. Dr. T.B. Kamara , Surgeon Specialist and Head of the Department of Surgery at the Connaught Hospital Freetown had offered his assistance and cooperation in organising the recruitment and screening of the patients. Patients had been recruited with the the help of information broadcast in the local media. "Loewe für Loewe"(Lion for Lion) an NGO operating in Sierra Leone from the town of Braunschweig in Germany had selected patients from their area of activities in the Waterloo region.

Fundraising was instituted with a publication about the project in the local newspaper in Kassel , a Flyer distributed to potential sponsors and donors and lectures delivered by the members of the team to various institutions. The project" German Paediatric Surgeons for Sierra Leone" is carried out under the umbrella of the BINTUMANI-D-SL Sierra Leone German Society, a philanthropic organisation formed by German citizens and Sierra Leoneans to promote development projects in Sierra Leone , with headquarters in Berlin.

We were thus able to procure donations from individuals, church groups , school classes and philanthropic organisations including Rotary Club Kassel . The organisation " Bild hilft - Ein Herz für Kinder" donated € 4847 Euros(approx.. 30 million Leones) worth of drugs .



Dr. M.Wright receiving a cheque of €1472.97 from a school class in Kassel

The Ambassador of Sierra Leone to the Federal Republic of Germany, His Excellency Mr. Jongopie Stevens gave us his wholehearted support by waiving the visa fees in Germany and by his intervention in Sierra Leone.

Aims and Objectives

- !) Provision of free surgical treatment to children of all ages with conditions amenable to surgery and which because of complexity , financial constraints or lack of appropriate expertise and instruments cannot be treated locally.
- 2) To establish professional relationship with surgical colleagues in Sierra Leone as a basis for future cooperation.
- 3) To provide informal teaching in paediatric surgical procedures to junior doctors and other staff.
- 4) To create awareness for the subspecialty of paediatric surgery amongst young doctors.

Members of the Team

Dr. Ibrahim Al – Naieb, Paediatric Surgeon in Kassel
Dr. Tilman Gresing, Head of the Department of Paediatric Surgery in Evangelical Hospital, Lippstadt.
Dr. Volker Dreimann, Head of the Department of Reconstructive Surgery in Evangelical Ham Hospital, Lippstadt
Dr.Morley Wright, Specialist Paediatrician and Project Coordinator.

Activities in Freetown

The team departed from Frankfurt Airport in the early hours of the 5th.of May with luggage containing drugs,infusions and surgical equipment in suitcases and aluminium boxes, for which excess baggage fees had to be paid.

We arrived at Lungi Airport in the evening of the 5th. of May and contrary to our expectations and the assurances given by the officials at the Ministry of Health and Sanitation and the Connaught Hospital no vehicle for the transfer from Lungi to Freetown had been provided. We were able with the assistance of some officials at Lungi airport to organise satisfactory transportation .

On Friday 6th. May we had a first meeting with the staff at the Surgical Department and were introduced to the two junior doctors, Dr. Frances Wurie and Dr. Bah, who had been assigned to the project. We also met with the local coordinator of Lion for Lion, Ms Martin and her team who had selected a number of patients from the Waterloo and Mama Beach area . The theatre staff was very helpful and agreed that the first operations could be performed on the following day which was a Saturday.

With the exception of two cases treated at Choithram's Hospital all operations were undertaken at the Connaught Hospital. Drugs and other materials were provided by the hospital for the children under five years of age in keeping with the provisions of the Free Health Initiative. However special drugs such as antibiotics for perioperative management and intravenous analgesics which were necessary and not easily available were provided by us. We also provided drugs and infusions for older children treated in the programme and other necessary materials for general use.

Total number of patients	50
Total number of operations	65 (multiple operations in some patients)
Children < 1year of age	8
Inguinal hernias	12
Umbilical hernias	12
Scars and contractures	9
Hydrocephalus	2
Anal atresia	4
Hypospadias	4
Others	9(including cleft of the soft palate, congenital branchial cleft sinus etc.)

Operations performed in 2 weeks.

Lion for Lion(Löwe für Löwe).

The organisation with headquarters in the town of Braunschweig, Germany is a non-governmental organisation actively involved in development projects in the peninsula at Mama Beach, Waterloo and Devil Hole. The team had been able to identify patients for treatment and had forwarded their particulars with photographs as early as February. They also support two private hospitals, the Katelana Clinic at Portee, a poor settlement in Wellington and another clinic at Lumpa near Waterloo. We visited both institutions in which patients are being treated at cheap rates. We were able to instruct the doctor-owner of the

hospital at Portee in the use of ECG and ultrasound machines donated by Lion for Lion.. Unfortunately it was later brought to our attention that "Dr" Bash at Lumpa is an impostor. The workers of Lion for Lion arranged for the transportation of their patients to Connaught Hospital and back to their villages. We also paid a visit to the new health centre built by the organisation at Brigitte village.

Visit to the Ola During Children's Hospital.

I once again took the opportunity to visit the Ola During Children's Hospital on two occasions. There has been considerable construction activity since my last visit 2010. The intensive care unit is nearing completion and a second story erected on the top of the rehabilitation unit now houses the offices of Cap Anamur and Professor Abiodun. On both occasions I donated surplus medicines not required for the surgical patients to the hospital. I also handed over an Injectomat infusion pump for use in the intensive care. During my visits I had fruitful discussions with Professor Abiodun, Dr. Fred Martineau, the representative of the Welbodi Partnership, and Professor Taqi.



Dr. Baion and staff with donated drugs

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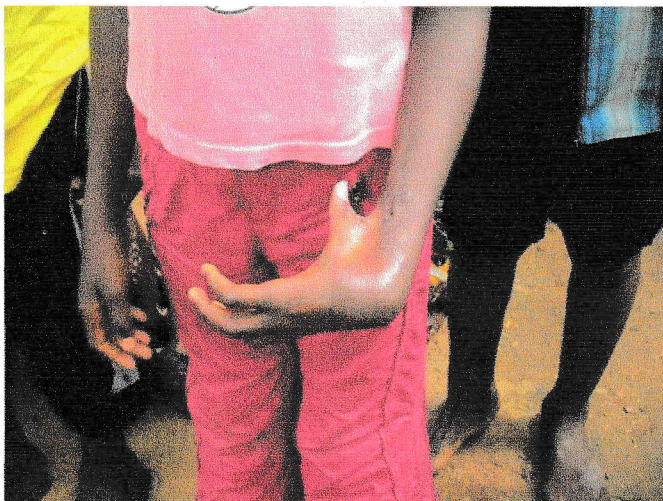
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Dr. Morley Wright and some members of staff at the ODCH



Some of the drugs provided



Child with contracture

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Child after plastic surgery



Child with syndactyly



Child with hydrocephalus after shunt implanatation

Visit at the First Lady's Mrs Sia Koroma on Friday 13th. May

This was the highlight of our stay in Sierra Leone. The visit was made possible through the good offices of the Ambassador of Sierra Leone to Germany, His Excellency Mr. Jongopie Siaka Stevens who was also in Freetown at the time. Dr. Al-Naieb and myself accompanied by the Ambassador Mr. Jongopie Stevens paid a courtesy call on the First Lady at the Hill Station Lodge. Unfortunately, Dr. Dreimann and Dr. Gresing were unable to attend due to their involvement in the theatre at the time.

We acquainted the First Lady with the purpose of the project and informed her that this was our second visit as the team had been in Sierra Leone in March 2010 during which young children with surgical conditions were treated. We informed her that funds for the project had been generated by donations from the german community. We also emphasised the role of the Bintumani-D-SL Organisation as the philanthropic body supporting the programme. In her welcoming statement, the First Lady, Madam Sia Koroma expressed her concern for the health care of the children in Sierra Leone which she said received a boost with the introduction of the Free Health Care Initiative for children under five years of age, pregnant women and lactating mothers a year ago. In this context she mentioned her active involvement in the affairs of the hospital in Matru Jong and expressed her gratitude to the Bintumani -D-SL Organisation for the material and financial assistance to the hospital. She thanked the surgeons for their selfless and humanitarian service to the children of Sierra Leone.

At the end of the meeting which was recorded and televised by the SLBC, the First Lady extended an invitation to an informal dinner for the following week at her residence.

At the dinner on the 18th. May at which all members of the team and Mr. Jongopie Stevens and wife were present, we were briefly introduced to the President of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, who also expressed his gratitude and appreciation for the input of the surgeons towards the health care of the children of the country.



Dinner with the First Lady, Mrs Sia Koroma

Visit to Mercy Ships

Prior to our departure from Germany we had already established contact with Mercy Ships Organisation with a hospital ship already stationed in Sierra Leone in the hope that some degree of cooperation could be arranged if necessary. This was not essential but we did receive an invitation to a guided tour of the ship during which we were briefed in the philosophy and the structure of the organisation and viewed the equipment and facilities on board.

Summary

The surgeons were able to perform 65 operations, some of them of a complex nature under unusual and partially difficult conditions. The inclusion of a specialist in plastic and reconstructive surgery in the team was fully justified because of the numbers of contractures and burn scars that were treated. Although the nurse anaesthetists were quite competent there were situations in which the absence of an anaesthetic doctor was regarded as a disadvantage. One positive aspect of the visit was the interest by one of the younger doctors to pursue further training in Germany. We hope we shall be able to assist her in the pursuance of her ambition.

At the end of our visit we had a meeting with the Surgeon Specialists at Connaught Hospital to discuss our experiences and evaluate the project. There was general consensus that the visit

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had been a success. However one aspect that was discussed was to explore the possibility of bringing an anaesthetist on subsequent visits. An alternative could be the use of the facilities at Choithram Memorial Hospital in selected cases. The management of the Choithram's Hospital has given its assurance to collaborate. Dr. Boima, Specialist Surgeon at Connaught Hospital has volunteered to assist in the preparation and coordination of the next visit. The cooperation with Lion for Lion was quite productive and demonstrates that selection of patients can be organised quite efficiently. We intend to maintain the contact with this organisation.

Acknowledgements.

We would first and foremost wish to express our sincere gratitude to The First Lady, Mrs Sia Koroma for her interest in the project, the encouragement we received from her and her hospitality. We are very appreciative of her promise to support us in future activities. We would like to thank Dr. I.B.Kamara and staff and the administration of the Connaught Hospital for their collaboration and support. Special thanks go to the members of the theatre staff for patiently enduring the unusually long hours occasionally spent in the operating room. Ms. Martin and the team from Lion for Lion deserve special thanks for their efforts in selecting and transporting the children to the Connaught Hospital for treatment.

This project would not have been possible without the financial input of individual donors in Germany to whom we express our sincere gratitude with special mention of the organisation "Bild-hilft-Ein Herz für Kinder" for the drugs donated..

We thank His Excellency Mr. Jongopie Stevens, Ambassador of Sierra Leone to Germany for his unstinted support of the project.

Critical evaluation.

We are convinced that the project is cost-effective and makes it possible to treat some children who could not have been managed in Sierra Leone. This includes conditions for which appropriate materials are not locally available. These children with conditions such as hydrocephalus, imperforate anus and contractures etc. cannot be treated in Sierra Leone and their treatment in other West African countries would require financial resources which are not available to the families. In one instance it was necessary to make an urgent order for an essential component to be sent from Germany. On the basis of the these considerations we intend to continue to offer this service to the children of Sierra Leone.

Preparations are therefore already being made for the next visit in March 2012

Dr.Morley Wright

