

Teaching opportunity in northern Ethiopia

Ben Silverman and Jude Cheong-Leen

The city of Gondar is located in the mountainous highlands of Northern Ethiopia at an altitude of 2100m, with the stunning Simien Mountains to the north and Lake Tana – the source of the Blue Nile - to the south. Amharic is the local language, but the language of clinical teaching is English.

There is an ongoing project to deliver an MSc in clinical anaesthesia in Gondar University Hospital. This provides clinical teaching for the non-physician anaesthetists who provide the vast majority of anaesthetics in Ethiopia. For the MSc course to succeed, we are looking for tutors from the UK for periods of 3 – 6 months at a time. Senior trainees (post-FRCA registrars), consultants or retired physician anaesthetists are ideal. The set-up enables interested anaesthetists to settle in rapidly, such that their time is productive and rewarding. For anyone considering working in a developing country, this is somewhere you could have a very beneficial role. There will be a salary equivalent to US\$1500 per month.

The key goals of the MSc are to improve clinical practice, promote evidence-based anaesthesia, increase involvement in continued professional development and improve staff retention. One critical feature of the curriculum is that it is very clinically relevant and theatre-based, in contrast to the BSc, which contains a large theoretical component. There is some seminar/workshop teaching but most of the course involves theatre-based clinical teaching, rather than theoretical or academic topics. The course started in September 2010 and the first intake graduated successfully in July 2012.

The hospital is a university teaching hospital with a catchment population of over 3 million. It has a medical school and provides BSc courses for other health professionals including anaesthetists. The five operating theatres cover surgical specialties including general surgery, gynaecology and obstetrics, orthopaedics, urology, paediatrics and ophthalmology. Many patients present late in the course of their disease and therefore a high proportion of surgery involves major procedures.

In Gondar, there is a small community of expatriates contributing to a very social and supportive atmosphere. If you have any interest in this project, could consider working in Gondar or would just like to know more, please contact us at bdzsilverman@gmail.com or jp.cheong-leen@gmail.com.