

Report of the Education Committee for the year 2008

The main educational activities of the year 2008 involved consolidation of purpose and action with our various partners in education. Some of these activities are being actively worked upon to take place in 2009.

The Core Principles

The primary goal of the partnership with our sister committees and with the Ghana KBNF Board is to establish a self-sustaining, high-quality clinical neuroscience service to not only look after the health-care needs of the Ghanaian people but to reach beyond Ghana to serve as a resource for other West African ECOWAS states.

A closely-related goal is to establish a framework to conduct both relevant clinical and basic research.

Some 2008 Milestones to advance the above goals:

- A mutual Memorandum of Agreement with Doctors for United Medical Missions (DrUMM), an US organisation that is active in Africa with medical missionary work. This group is headed by Dr. John Sampson, a neuro-anaesthesiologist at John Hopkins University, who is engaged in the process of recruiting fellow neuro-clinicians in the USA to join in the effort of African outreach. A closely-related ally – Pro-Health International- is joining in with KBNF to structure a visit to Ghana and Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital (KBTH) in late 2009. It is anticipated that neurosurgeons and other neuro-related personnel, including some partners from the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) will join in as well.
- The Critical Development of training models that are being proposed as being practical in the geo-political and social climate in Ghana. Several models are under consideration.

Model #1 seeks to train neuro-experts entirely within the country of Ghana, with the idea being that this approach reduces the likelihood of a “Brain Drain”. This approach is currently favoured by the Ministry of Health and the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Model #2 seeks to train some highly-selected Ghanaian young trainees abroad, especially in Canada, to inculcate them with high standards of both knowledge and work ethic. Although favoured by some foreign educational experts as the quickest and most effective way of training competent professionals, especially at the level of neurosurgeons and neurologists, practical considerations of financing and of the potential of “Brain Drain” have led to a cautious approach in this area

Model #3 seeks to bring adequately-trained neuro-specialists, such as doctors and paramedical professionals, to certain centres abroad for an appropriate and realistic period of time to “top up” their skills

It is possible that these models may not be mutually exclusive

Important Educational Alliances exist between KBNF, and Montreal Neurological Institute through Professor Richard Riopelle (Head of Neurology and Neurosurgery, University of Texas Medical Branch through Professor Lisa Cain (neuroanatomist), John Hopkins Hospital through Dr. John Sampson (neuroanaesthesiology), University of British Columbia through Dr. Gary Redekop (Head of Neurosurgery) and potentially with the University of Toronto through Dr. Peter Carlen (neurologist)

- Two important Developmental visits from Vancouver, Canada to Accra, Ghana occurred in October 2008

1) Mr. Don Jenion, an engineer with broad expertise in Hospital Planning, and Mr Kaien Shimizu, a senior planner in the highly-respected Resource Planning Group have now developed a planning outline on behalf of the University of Ghana and its College of Health Sciences to construct modern facilities at both the KBTH Campus and at the Legon Campus in Accra. Although these plans deal primarily with the physical plants themselves and how they will relate to overall future development of medical training at the University of Ghana, nonetheless the physical components of the new Korle-Bu Neuroscience Centre of Excellence (KBNCE) are integral to these developmental plans. Site planning reports are being advanced in Jan. 2009.

These physical plans will provide an environment in which the Neurological can and will be developed

2) Dr. Gary Redekop, current Head of the UBC Division of Neurosurgery and Dr. Felix Durity, Professor Emeritus visited Ghana on a one-week fact-finding mission. As a result of various meetings, several initiatives integral to education and training have been proposed: a) the acquisition of microsurgical technology with the provision of surgical microscopes, neuro-endoscopy tools and a variety of other essential pieces of equipment to improve neurosurgical care and practice in the very near term b) the undertaking to assist the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons in developing a modern-day curriculum for their existing neurosurgical training program and c) to attempt to create some interchange of neurosurgical support

- An impending visit to Ghana by Dr. Jocelyne LaPointe, a neuro-radiologist, with an agenda to assist in the development of a viable training program in the critical field of Neurology

Two other items of interest and importance to the overall training issues are developing:

1) An association for potential major biomedical engineering support and thereby training to the KBTH by the company of Big Sea Medical of Mr. Stephen Baia.

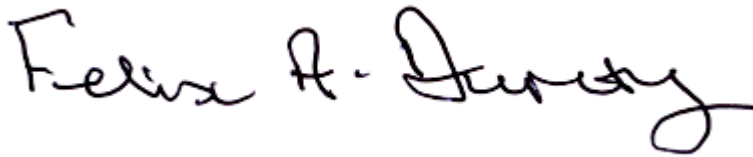
2) A growing interest of international students, who have visited the kbnf.org website and as a result are making applications to spend elective time in Ghana in either Neurosurgery or Neurology. This can not help but broaden our visibility and appeal and create the opportunity to advance an international network for collaborative service and work.

Finally:

1) Plans for initiating an early Research platform have been delayed because of a failure to obtain funding for an International Brain Research Organisation (IBRO) joint meeting in Ghana, scheduled for January 2009, with the International League against Epilepsy (ILAE). This initiative is to be further pursued.

2) CIDA funding requests to support the KBNF initiative, including a budget for Education are in progress.

Submitted by

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Felix A. Durity". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Felix Durity
Chair, Education and Training Committee, KBNF