



Inter Care Report **Ghana visit,** **12th-27th February 2009**

Sister Patricia Story, Chair of Inter Care
Mrs Carol Austin, Resource Manager Inter Care

We owe a debt of gratitude to Archbishop Peter Sarpong and Fr Andy Soley for their hospitality and for facilitating our visits to the units.

Ghana has developed in many areas since our last visit in 2004. Recently a General Election took place and this time was almost completely peaceful. The main areas of development were in communications (cell phones), public transport, and availability of food. It was very noticeable that the small vendors had large stocks for sale and the Central Market in Kumasi had been cleared and relocated. Slum areas had been cleared as well. Housing has greatly improved, largely due to the efforts of Habitat Organisation/Charity (USA). The contrast between the very poor but better constructed houses and those much larger houses was noticeable. Many houses were under development especially the larger ones. The cities are more highly populated and extended probably due to the increase in immigrants. The roads were greatly improved and more sophisticated especially in the towns and cities. The presence of good road signs made getting about much easier despite the huge increase in good cars and taxis! We have however, given more detailed instructions about how to get to the various clinics by road.

The presence of the Health Insurance scheme (described by Carol) has made a huge difference and the local teaching hospital in Kumasi is now able to afford to upgrade their buildings and services. There were many more private medical clinics and a tighter security on the Pharmacies. In short, the standard of living has improved. However, poverty remains ever present and wages remain at around \$1-2 daily. The introduction of new Ghana Cedis about 2 years ago has simplified their monetary system greatly.

Meeting with Fr Andy Soley

It is proving difficult to get the clinics to collect their consignments and also there is a delay for Andy to get them from the airport thus creating a cost.

In future we will send out information on when they are coming 2 weeks in advance of sending, then send copy of weighbill when we get it.

Clinics that still need to collect next consignment are:

St Michael's Pramso

Prisons

St Anne's Donyina (this had arrived when we reached them)

St Patrick's Offinso received one consignment by post informed by CRA that there is another at NCSC

St Martin,s Agroyesum

Sunday 15th February

St John's Health Centre Domeabra



This clinic is around 20miles from Kumasi taking the Sunyani Rd, at the Mankaranso junction turn left , carry on down this road to Domeabra. There is a sign at a fork in the road for St John's – take the right hand fork and the clinic is on the right.

This is a small, remote clinic, which is run by a midwife/nurse. They have the facilities to refer to a nearby hospital, where there is a resident doctor.

The clinic has around 20 beds and deals with only basic medical cases.eg dehydration, chest infection, malaria, dysentery and gastroenteritis, pain from simple trauma cases etc. However, maternity cases are easily dealt with on a regular basis.

There are maternity facilities and general medicine beds, but there are no surgical beds.

The Nurse/Midwife in charge was very well informed and eager to help, she completed the new questionnaire while we waited and she will send a new drugs questionnaire and annual report form by post. It became apparent that in the past they have asked for medicines which are not appropriate to their needs, and the In Charge agreed to fill in another drug questionnaire to suit their needs and abilities which does not take into account medicines which they normally pass onto local doctor.

When we visited they had just collected a consignment of medicines from NCSC –ICP3884 A-D.

The pharmacy protocols are extremely useful as are the MIMS and BNF The boxes that the consignment was in had also been used at Inter Care for sorting and had the word INCOMPLETE written on them. We MUST ensure that this does not happen in future.

St John's has a small laboratory and would be grateful for test tubes, blood sample tubes, microscope slides etc, they are able to carry out HB tests, pregnancy tests, Malaria tests and HIV tests (these kits are supplied free of charge by the government)

They would also like any baby (newborn) clothes or cot sheets/blankets.

Monday 16th February

We were visited at the Archbishop's House by Father Francis who suggested that it would be easier for the clinics in the Kumasi area to collect their medicines from central point in Kumasi rather than from NCSC. Apparently they have to pay some duty and the service charge levied by NCSC as well as the cost of fuel to get to Accra, which for some of them is a considerable journey. He has a contact (a cousin) in the customs at the airport who will get them cleared

He will let Inter care have an address for the consignments and the paperwork.

KATH. (Komfe Anoyke Training Hospital)



This Hospital is situated in Kumasi.

This a large government hospital and Inter Care only supplies the Diabetic Centre with insulin syringes and other diabetes specific items.

When we arrived, we were met by Sister Ester who is the Nursing Officer in charge of the Diabetic Centre. She explained that the centre is thriving and the number of patients is growing. They are still in need of support from Inter Care as they are still unable to obtain insulin syringes.

We looked around the centre and talked to the staff.

We did not feel that it was appropriate to ask them to fill in the questionnaire and we were not in a position to look at the web site with them.

St Patrick's Hospital Offinso Maase



Offinso is situated in the Maase Region approximately 18 km from Kumasi.

Leave Kumasi on the Bantama Road

Stay on this road until you enter Offinso

Turn left signposted "Lighthouse International Chapel"

Carry on past the Ghana Provincial Bank and follow the road round past the Ghana Water company.

Turn left before you reach the Bishop's House

Turn Right signposted St Patrick's Hospital.

When we arrived, the Staff were expecting us and were very welcoming. We met with the Pharmacist, a Doctor, the Matron and the Administrator, all of whom appeared to be very professional and spoke English well.

They had recently received a consignment of medicines from Inter Care all of which were of use to them. When asked about the quality of the medicines sent the doctor reasonably stated that he could only speak for the medicines which he had prescribed, but that they were of the best quality and he knew of no instances where the patients had be adversely affected because the medicines had been re-issued.

There were several items that they needed and asked if Inter Care could provide particularly instruments and some drugs which are not on Inter Care's Questionnaire. We left a new Drug Questionnaire and asked that they write on it any other medicines that they would use if we were able to get them.

We toured the hospital with the Pharmacist and discovered that they have a small dental clinic and are very short of dental instruments and an eye clinic and will provide a list of the eye drops that they could use. The hospital has visiting teams from the UK who come and operate daily for 2 weeks often bring their own equipment and eye medicaments.

We have left annual report forms and drug lists for them to return to IC.

This is a large hospital with a large staff and we asked if they really needed help from Inter Care as there is a health insurance scheme in Ghana. Their Health Insurance Scheme - annual fee 17 Gh c, all of your health care is covered, however there is a layer of the community who are not able to afford this and by including the free medicines from Inter Care they are able to give free treatment to them. Also there is a price bracket in which they are allowed to purchase medicines and often, effective medicines are outside the Insurance budget.

We showed them the web site and asked them to provide an update for their hospital which they agreed to do by email

They need Pharmacy protocols in next consignment and also extra BNFs for the pharmacist

Tuesday 18th February

St Peter's Hospital at Jacobu

St Peters Hospital is situated about an hour from Kumasi

Leave Kumasi on the Obuasi Road passing through Nkoranso

Carry on until reach Amansi Central turn right signposted Jacobu

In Jacobu turn left to the hospital (Central Bank is on the right)

Road sweeps down and round to the hospital



The staff at St Peter's were expecting us and we were greeted by the Administrator Emmanuel Appenteng, a very competent and efficient young man

St Peters Health Centre is in a very poor area and consists of several unconnected buildings on the top of the hill overlooking Jacobu . They are in the process of building a new block which will include an out patients department, a laboratory, consulting rooms, registration and a waiting area and some more beds. This has been funded by the government which will not however fund the building of new wards which are badly needed or that of an accommodation block for the staff.

It is immaculately clean but very poor. There are at the moment 8 female beds, 8 male beds, 15 childrens' beds and 20 maternity beds, (40-50 deliveries per week)when the new block is completed this will give a total of 80 beds

They had already got copies of the Inter Care paperwork from the last consignment they received (Feb 2nd) this was sent by DPD and arrived safe and cheaply. There was another consignment, the previous one waiting at the NCSC for them to collect. It takes all day and much fuel for them to collect from NCSC and they also have to pay them a service charge. If the arrangement with Father Vincent can be made to work it would be much more cost effective for them to collect from Kumasi.

It was agreed that the paperwork for any future consignments should be sent by email to Emmanuel having sent a text message to say that he has email as he can only pick up his emails on his weekend visits home to Kumasi.

The team completed the questionnaire and expressed their thanks to Inter Care for its help. We also discussed their changing needs for medicines and produced a new Drug Questionnaire, the doctor commented that there were some drugs which we sent which were very useful, but we did not send enough at which point we explained that we were restricted by the amounts that we receive from donors .

The hospital has a small laboratory and would like to receive test tubes, sample bottles , microscope slides and in the future, petrie dishes.

They perform some quite major surgery and would like instruments such as retractors, Spencer Well's forceps, and curettage equipment.

They are looking for funding and we agreed to try to find some trusts which they could apply to for funding to build the new staff accommodation but stressed that we could not find the money for them.

St Michael's Hospital Pramso



St Michael's Hospital is situated about 40mins from Kumasi

Leave Kumasi on the Asokwa Road (South West bypass)

Enter Asokwa and at the T junction turn right into Lake Road

This road goes straight into Pramso and the hospital is on the left

Arrived at St Michael's to find that Kwame was not there even though it was he who arranged the meeting.

We met the medical director and the pharmacist who both seemed very disinterested to begin with but in fact became very communicative and helpful.

The hospital has 99 beds which include medical, surgical, paediatric, maternity and ophthalmic. They are in the process of building a new ophthalmic centre and have a visiting team of ophthalmologists from Canada for 2weeks each year who carry out about 150 cataract ops.

They are an accredited hospital for the treatment of HIV/AIDS.

During a tour of the hospital we visited the wards and were shown their new mortuary. They have a small but well organised lab where they are able to carry out CD4 counts and the full range of haematology, biochemistry etc.

They carry out approximately 15 hernia ops per week and have a paediatric surgeon who visits once a week, Prof Abatanga

They are in need of all types of instruments and lab equipment (Test Tubes, Sample tubes, microscope slides)

They are using:

Combivir

Nevirapine 200mgs

Efaverenz 600mgs

Stavudine 30 and 40mgs

Lamivudine 150mgs

Pharmacist promised to fill in drug questionnaire and send it and the annual report back next week with a quote about their need and Inter Care's help. He is very willing to do workshops with outreach clinics.

(If you visit include a visit to the lake which is nearby ,R&R)

Wednesday 19th February

St Anne's Clinic Donyina

St Anne's is situated about 30 minutes from Kumasi . follow the Accra Road and Donyina is off to the left (directions are sketchy because we left Kumasi on Accra road and then had to get involved in a diversion because of traffic problems)

When last visited in 2004 the clinic was very badly run and Inter Care temporarily stopped sending medicines. The staff has now been replaced by Dominican Sisters who are working very hard to improve the situation there. They all seem to be very efficient and

determined to help the local population to the best of their ability. Having a Dr permanently is new at this clinic.

It is a very poor area, they have received a grant from a German Lady to start to rebuild the clinic which is in poor shape. They have started (the building is now up) but they need more money for equipment, basic furniture and more staff.

At the moment there are only 8 beds but when the new wing is finished there will be 30.

Sister Josephine, the medical officer is a qualified Paediatrician who trained in Ireland and then the UK, Sister Stella is a trained Laboratory Scientist and Sister Anna the hospital Administrator

They collected a consignment of medicines from NCSC the day before we arrived and were delighted with the contents. Whilst we were there they completed the drug questionnaire.

We did not feel that it was appropriate to ask them to complete the new questionnaire as they had not been at the clinic long enough to give an informed opinion on this.



Thursday 20th February

The Prisons (Kumasi) *We did not take any pictures in the prison as we felt that it would be intrusive*

We first met with Father Martin Padi , he is the Chaplain/Prison Officer and he kindly offered to take us to all three prisons.

The first was Central Prison which was built to house 800 inmates and now has a population of 1760, of these there were 16 who were condemned to death and 36 who were "lifers" It is however unlikely that those in the death cell will be executed.

We met with the Governor and then went to meet the nurse in charge of the infirmary. There is one trained nurse and 4 nursing aides. We completed a drug questionnaire whilst we were there.

We then went on to the women's prison where there are 200 prisoners, they again have one trained nurse and 3 aides.

At Manihya prison (next to the Asante King's Palace) there are 160 prisoners who are all serving terms of less than 6 years. We discussed their medicine needs with the nurse in charge of the infirmary.

It was decided that Father Padi would be responsible for the collection and delivery of medicines for all of the prisons.

Friday 20th February

St Edward's Dwinyama



Leave Kumasi on the Sunyani Road pass through Asoyebu and Onkerebu ,past the turn for Akropong on the right and Hollywood fuel station

Toll booths at Tabre

Ntsere

Mankarakso

Attakrom

Amakom

St Edward's is on the main road on the left.

St. Edwards has developed extensively since the last visit in 2004 and they are now in the process of looking for equipment for the new wards and the new theatre. They have 11 beds and deal mostly with maternity , medical and have a very small surgical section.

Sr Laetitia is a qualified nurse and midwife and appears to be very capable and efficient .This observation has been quoted locally as far away as Accra!

They are in need of a small steriliser, episiotomy scissors, delivery instruments and laboratory materials

9 They are also in need of a delivery table. Carol to speak to Jacob's Well about their next trip to Ghana)

Sister has kept the drug questionnaire and the annual return form but filled in the new questionnaire

She will photocopy the National Insurance drug list and send us a copy. Inter Care has funded this expense.

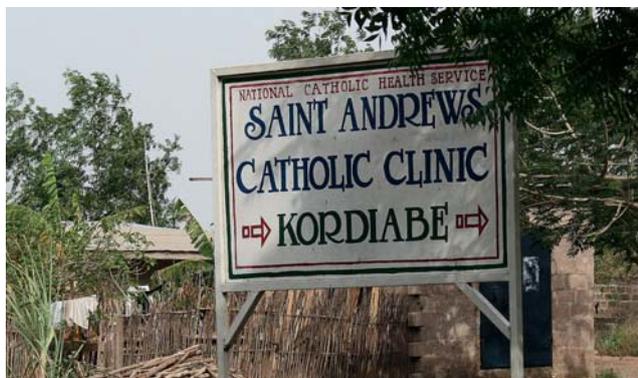
NB:There were some of the drugs that they were able to buy in country which were causing some concern e g nifedipine. The nifedipine which comes from Inter Care seems to work much more effectively judging by clinical response; than that which was bought locally.

Sister filled in the new questionnaire and added a very useful quote for use with the PCTs etc.

We feel that it would be very useful to get Sister over for an AGM or some other function as she is a very eloquent speaker and a very "strong woman".. An excellent representative for the work of Inter Care in Ghana.

Tuesday 4th February

St Andrew's Clinic Kordiabe



This clinic was suggested as a recipient of Inter Care support by Father Andy Soley and he took us to visit.

It is about 40 minutes from Accra.

From the Catholic Secretariat turn left and at East Legon turn left again

At T junction turn right. At next T junction turn left and then take the first right (now in the Adenta Madena region)

At T Junction turn left and then take the first major right signed Aburi and Korforidu.

Pass through - Frafraha

Amanfrom

Oybi

New Saabi

Bawakashe

Aiuukumo

Ago Meda

Arrive at Kordiabe. Turn right to St Andrew's Clinic

The clinic, which is in a very rural situation was opened in 2003 and was initially given some money by the government to provide some basic equipment, they now have no help from government. The unit was well laid out and spotlessly clean.

The clinic is run by the Indian Sisters of the Holy Family Congregation. The Sister in Charge is Sister Lucy who made us very welcome .She is a trained nurse, midwife and anaesthetic nurse. There are 2 other sisters/nurses one of which is also a midwife and the other has had some training in laboratory testing (simple tests – HB, Malaria, urine tests etc). They have a visiting dentist once a week and have been promised a visiting doctor once a week,

Sister Lucy completed the questionnaires with our help and it was evident that the medicines that they are able to competently treat patients, are the basic medicines from Inter Care's list.

This clinic has virtually no medicines and very little equipment

We agreed to try to send a one off parcel and then to consider them for future support.

Summary

During our visit it became apparent that there is a national health scheme in Ghana which costs 17 Gh c per year (around 10GBP) This covers all of their health needs, but there is a very limited list of medicines which the doctors are allowed to prescribe. This is defined by the cost of the medicines. All of the clinics visited said that many of the drugs which they receive from Inter Care are in fact the ones that they have to buy and would not be able to afford were it for our help. They were also sure that they were able to treat many more of those who could afford to pay nothing for their treatment

It was also clear that we need to look at the way in which we send to Ghana, all of the clinics in the Kumasi region found it very difficult to get to NCS in Accra to collect their consignments, not only for the amount of time taken but also with regard to the cost of fuel. We also felt that Father Andy was very overburdened with the amount of work that he does at NCS and looked for an alternative to try out. Mgrs. Francis Xavier who is based in Kumasi has agreed to collect the consignments from the Airport where he has a cousin in the customs department and to take them to Kumasi. This would cut around 200km from the journey the clinics need to make.

They would need to pay a duty charge (if they go through NCS they have an exemption) but balanced against the service charge and storage charge at NCS and the cost of the fuel they all felt that it would be worth a try.

I feel that we learnt a lot from this visit, most of it positive. The need for Inter Care's support to these clinics is still great.

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