

Interplast-mission Mangu, Nigeria 16 – 31 maart 2019

Team:

Rens Huisinga	Plastic Surgeon, team captain
Jorien Werkman	Plastic Surgeon
Tom de Jong	Urologist
Gerben Baake	Anesthetist
Geesje Bonhof - Boer	Anesthesia assistent
Suzanne Hulst	Anesthesia assistent
Clemens Herbrink	Operation theatre assistant
Annet Brouwer - Kerssies	Operation theatre assistant

Hospital: COCIN Hospital & Rehabilitation Centre, Mangu, Plateau State, Nigeria

On Saturday, March 16, the eight of us gathered at Schiphol; Clemens, Annet (surgery assistants & experts by experience), Geesje and Suzanne (anesthesia assistants; Geesje had also been to Mangu several times), Tom (urologist, for the 2ndtime), Gerben (anesthetist) and Rens and I (plastic surgeons, with Rens who went more often to Mangu before).

For Suzanne, Gerben and me it was the first time that we went with Interplast. It was therefore very nice that we already had the necessary information in advance from the people who went more often. Moreover, there was also some uncertainty caused by the Nigerian elections, in the period prior to our departure. Fortunately, it became more quiet, and it was decided to continue our journey.

After a long flight via Frankfurt to Abuja, we arrived in the afternoon in Abuja, where Kefas already was waiting for us. We spent the night with the nuns in a nunnery near Abuja, so we didn't have to travel at night.

The next day we continued our journey to Mangu in two cars, a journey that was increasingly bumpy, but the impressions made up a lot. Kefas took good care of us during the journey.

Once arrived in Mangu, Phoebe welcomed us at our guesthouse. Phoebe took care of us during these two weeks, baked us bread, made delicious breakfast, lunch and dinner.

After a short walk across the hospital grounds, we went to bed early to get to work on time the next day.

While Clemens, Annet, Geesje and Suzan together with the Noas / Nuhus (both men listened to both names) and Timothy set up the operating room and "recovery". Rens, Gerben, Tom and I started our consultation hour.

It took a while to find out how the logistics could best be arranged: Tom had an individual room to see all urological patients. Rens, Gerben and I took place in another room to see all the plastic and anesthesiological consultation.

In an excel file the important data of the patients (although some ask quickly turned out to be redundant; so no one had allergies and the duration of the existence of most burn contractures were often "10 months"). It also turned out that some patients already had a date for the operation (a schedule that previously Cees often took on his behalf), so in addition to consulting, we were also operation planners. Gerben was at his preoperative screening supported by charming medicine college girls..

We saw at least 200 patients during this day from 8 am to 7 pm.

It was striking how quickly I got used to seeing the most severe burn contractures; in the afternoon the "regular" exchange

of conversation between Rens and me; "Again" a PBC (post burn contracture), left / right, duration of operation and then "next patient".

All this to see as many patients as possible. Then it turned out at the end of the afternoon that our program for the next two weeks was full and that there were still many patients that needed to be seen.

On the advice of Kefas we then went back to the guesthouse and we have during the week between surgeries seen a few more patients with severe injuries that really needed to be assessed.

We agreed with the team to do a briefing of the program of the next week and per day, in order to discuss points for attention. With this we could also tackle daily 'bottlenecks' quickly; such as who had the "generator task" (directly at arrival at the OR had to be actively asked to the Noas to turn on the generator), but also together the logistics in preparing the things, such as preparing the "jungle juice" (anesthetic solution), the post-operative controls of that day.

Gerben had an ultrasound device (the Philips Lumify) and was able to give the patients a block so general anesthesia was rarely needed. Rens and I then injected some jungle juice locally, with adrenaline in it to keep the blood loss to a minimum. In this way we could perform the procedures relatively safely and quickly. Rens and I have during this week mainly children and adults with burn contractures operated on, as well some ulcers and a few cleft patients.

Tom operated on many patients with a spinal block and has many diagnostic scopes performed in patients with an AGS (adrenogenital syndrome; abnormal development of the genitals, which sometimes made male / female distinction difficult) but also various reconstructions and corrections of meatus stenoses.

Given the large selection, we quickly decided to include the Saturday of our stay for operations, which meant that we operated for more than 9 days.

We treated a total of 94 patients.

What made our stay particularly memorable was the teamwork in which we took care of everything. The support and glee from the local team, consisting of both Noas and Timothy who each serve us morning with the phrase "Did you sleep well? I myself slept like a baby and woke up like a giant man!" (Which was really funny, considering Timothy is no taller than 1.60m). Also the enthusiasm of Dr. Patience and Dr. Emanuel to learn skills from us and the good care of Kefas, Doctor Mike and Phoebe made our stay one unforgettable experience.

We have been able to help quite a few patients, but despite that, so much extra care is needed. Educating local people, what we did during our stay in Mangu as well, but also encourage the confidence and motivation of the local doctors to take part in the care themselves. The burn unit and care of fresh burns goes well, but the sometimes relatively simple procedures for burn contractures are still lagging behind. A nice goal for the future to improve this.

On the other hand is the joy and gratitude of the patients and the local municipality so big that it made the trip more than worth it! Together with our team we had an unforgettable trip, evenings with games, full of humor and cosiness!

Jorien Werkman