

Reflection on Tanzania trip

It was such a pleasure and privilege to part of this collaboration with Muhimbili National Hospital (MNH) in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. I thought I'd reflect on my time there, and since, with the help of MNH's motto which is "Huduma, Elimu, Utafiti" as it seems fitting in a good partnership that our goals and hopes are aligned.

Huduma (Service) – Its very telling when the first word in the motto of an institution is service and that's what we as health professionals are primarily here to do – to serve our communities through medical care. Being able to observe the consultants helping local doctors with their most challenging cases in order to enable them to be more self-sufficient has helped me better understand what it truly means to be a global surgeon.

Elimu (Education) – One of my favourite photos from this trip is the picture below of Roba (Plastics Consultant) helping the Tanzanian plastics team with free flaps, other complex techniques and enabling them to use the electric dermatome that they already had but were nervous about using. Her encouraging words, practical advice and teaching was very much appreciated by the team. Furthermore, education definitely works both ways and I have certainly learnt so much from this trip – be it seeing extraordinary paediatric surgical cases in clinic with Victor, seeing mentorship modelled over several levels within our team and between our teams and even being able to spend some downtime reflecting with the team about how these experiences build and shape us.

Utafiti (Research) - the research skills symposium was an excellent way to equip local research capacity to enable local research by local clinicians to head off data mining. Even more encouraging was the request for longer more in-depth sessions in the future that I'm definitely keen to get involved with.

Once again, reflecting on this trip in a turbulent time such as this has definitely brought hope to me that when the dust of this pandemic settles, there are promising things up ahead to look forward to.

