



**Report of Second Anesthesia Conference
Held in Monrovia from November 5-7, 2008**

Background information:

As you may be aware, the Liberia civic war devastated every fabric of our society and the health sector was no exception. The area of anesthesia was highly hit. The last batch of anesthetists trained at John F. Kennedy Medical Center was in 1983 and during the civic war many anesthetists fled the country. When the war subsided the Phebe Hospital resumed training of anesthetists but on a very small scale, not more than three students at a time. The disruption in the training of Nurse-Anesthetists has created serious health problems in the area of surgical interventions. Some health institutions do not have any trained Anesthetist at all. Some surgeons, in extreme emergency cases have to take the risks administering their own anesthesia while at the same serving the surgeon. A recent report from data collected during the last Liberia Anesthesia Conference of November 2007 by the Liberia Association of Nurse-Anesthetists (LANA) revealed that there are about twenty-five trained anesthetists who are presently practicing throughout the country.

Such situation necessitated the need for training of kind for us the anesthetists in the country.

From all analysis, the conference has three major objectives:

- **To build the capacity of Liberian Nurse-anesthetists since in most cases they are working independently in the absence of an anesthesiologist and the field is also dynamic**
- **Consolidate themselves so that their appeals to Central Government for improvement in facilities and services can be more forceful**
- **To organize themselves as professional body for quality services to humanity**

The second Nurse-Anesthetists Conference was held in Monrovia, John F. Kennedy Medical Center, National AIDS and STIs Control Program Conference from Wednesday November 5 to Friday November 7, 2008.

The conference was organized under the leadership of Dr. Keith Thomson of Mercy Ships Africa and Dr. Jim Tomarken and Dr. Stella Eguma of John F. Kennedy Medical Center along with the leadership of the Liberia Association of Nurse-Anesthetists (LANA). The conference was facilitated by five international anesthesiologists and one anesthesiologist assigned at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center. Dr. Tomarken

coordinated the training activities, arranged for catering services for meals and accommodations for the three days.

The facilitators were:

1. Dr. Keith Thomson
2. Dr. Michael Dockery
3. Dr. Sarah
4. Dr. Alexandria Bajarska
5. Dr. Anuraag Guleria
6. Dr. Stella Eguma

There were twenty-nine participants: 21 certified Nurse-anesthetists, 6 students in Anesthesia School from Phebe Training Program, 1 pharmacy student from the University of Liberia medical College, a journalist from a local Radio Station, King FM who came to cover the event and a nursing student TNIMA.

The conference began with an opening ceremony which was attended by all the participants, the facilitators, the Deputy Minister of Health for Preventive and Curative Services, at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare Dr. Moses Pewu, the General Administrator for John F. Kennedy, Mrs. Wannie Scott McDonald, Dr. Stella Eguma, a World Bank hired Anesthesiologist and others. Dr. Jim Tomarken of John F. Kennedy gave the welcoming remarks in which he expressed appreciation for the training team presence in Liberia in recognition of the need for manpower development in anesthesia education in Liberia following a prostrated civil war which devastated the country so much in every aspect.

This was followed by a brief overview of the conference in PowerPoint presentation by Dr. Keith Thomson. The presentation highlighted anesthetic activities around the World, morbidity and mortality rates and causes, strategies to improve anesthesia services thus reducing anesthesia related deaths in various hospitals. He is indeed a veteran in holding conference of this nature around the World.

A special statement was delivered by Mr. J. Garrison Kerwillain, President of the Liberia Association of Nurse-Anesthetists (**LANA**) in which he sincerely and humbly appealed to the Government of Liberia through Deputy Minister Moses Pewu to urgently recognize and improve anesthesia services in the Liberia. He stressed the need the need for training as there are only twenty-six trained Nurse-Anesthetists practicing in the Liberia now. He lamented that the last batch of anesthetists trained by the Government of Liberia took place since 1983. He made several recommendations to the Government among which are the followings:

- ❖ That the Ministry of Health & Social Welfare recognize need and services of Nurse-Anesthetists in the Liberia
- ❖ Increase/adjust the salary of Nurse-anesthetists as they are not only nurses but nurses with specialty
- ❖ Provide needed anesthesia drugs and supplies as well as equipment on a regular and sustainable basis
- ❖ Resume training of anesthetists as soon as possible since there is now an anesthesiologist, Dr. Stella Eguma in the country.

In response, Dr. Pewu of Ministry of Health & Social Welfare promised to take the Association's recommendations to the proper Authorities at the Ministry of Health & and Social Welfare for discussion and redress. He further called on any anesthetists who are not employed, to contact his office for possible assistance in facilitating the process.

Thereafter, active training kicked off with Dr. Keith Thomson taking the lead in presenting on the topic: Obstetric hemorrhage, its etiology, signs and symptoms, complications. The lecture was followed by questions and answer period. Second lecturer was Dr. Michael Dockery and he presented on maternal hypertension, Pre-eclampsia and eclampsia, its etiology, incidence, signs and symptoms complications and management.

The third lecturer, Dr. Alex presented on blood transfusion, its indications, associated factors, complications and management.

A delicious lunch was served at One O'clock Post-Meridian.

The session resumed thereafter with discussion on the topic good professionalism in anesthesia. The discussion was led by participants who were placed in small groups to discuss subtropics such as:

- ✓ Building a better team
- ✓ Qualities of a good leader
- ✓ Being a good role model
- ✓ Being an example of Christ
- ✓ How to acquire basic knowledge and skills

The first quizzing was conducted and prizes awarded to winners.

The first was ended with a heavy and delicious dinners in honors of all the participants.

Activities of day two started at 9:15AM, with the lecturers presenting on the following topics:

1. Pediatric Anesthesia with emphasis on anatomical differences, drug dosage , equipment & monitoring
2. Newborn Resuscitation with emphasis on resuscitation procedure, care of newborn. Each participant took term to do demonstration while others watched.
3. Anesthesia Complications with emphasis on causes and how to prevent them.
4. Fluid Management
5. Case report with reference to pre and post operative assessment
6. Anesthesia record & record keeping

Day three started with quizzing and Mr. Arkoi Miller won the first prize and the second and third winners also received prizes.

Another session began with lecturers deliberating on the following topics:

- ✓ Trauma and its management
- ✓ Post operative pain management
- ✓ Anesthesia in patient with medical disease.

The final session reiterated the need for the anesthetist to take responsibility in caring for his patients to ensure anesthesia related deaths or complication is significantly reduced.

A formal closing ceremony was held with the speeches of appreciations from the both the local facilitators and the participants to the international six man team of lecturers.

Submitted on behalf of LANA by: J. Garrison Kerwillain



Retrospection! (Participants from First Anesthesia Conference November 15-17, 2007)