

Cairdeas Newsletter

Cairdeas International Palliative Care Trust



Compassion in action – perhaps that sums up the work of Cairdeas, and over recent months we have seen this in various ways: the generosity of many people who paid for morphine during a shortage at Mulago Hospital, the dedicated time and effort of all those who work with us, and the commitment of students learning new skills so that they can bring relief to those suffering in their own community.

We take this opportunity to thank all those who make all of this possible, and we hope you enjoy reading more about what's been happening.

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Morphine Appeal - Thank You !

In the latter part of last year there arose a serious problem with unavailability of morphine at Mulago Hospital in Kampala because of interruptions in the normal supplies while the government reorganised the supply network. As you can imagine, this caused a great deal of distress, not only to the patients who no longer had appropriate pain relief, but also for the staff who felt powerless to help them.

However, in the short term it was possible to purchase morphine with the help of Hospice Africa Uganda (HAU) – but this, of course, required funds which we did not have. So we made this urgent need the subject of our Christmas appeal; our target was £4500 which would be enough to pay for morphine for all those in the hospital who need it, for about three months by when the normal supply would be resumed. We are very grateful for the help of HAU during this difficult time.

The response was wonderful – not only from our supporters but also from others who could identify with this humanitarian need. Even before Christmas we had almost reached our target, and we had received almost £6000 when we closed the appeal early this year.

The new system for importing and distributing morphine to Mulago Hospital is taking shape and we expect that regular supplies will be resumed soon. The money donated will amply provide for morphine until then; and surplus funds will be used by the Palliative Care Unit at the hospital, including paying for a scholarship for one of the nurses to take the Diploma in Palliative Care which will help to improve the use and prescribing of morphine more widely within the hospital.



Dr Jo and Frances with liquid morphine

Dr Jo Dunn

Dr Jo Dunn has been working with Mhoira in the palliative care team at Makerere University and Mulago Hospital since October last year, and has accompanied Mhoira on visits to India. She describes here how she became involved in working with Cairdeas.

While training as a doctor specialising in Palliative Medicine in London I decided to take a year out to work for Hospice Africa Uganda, starting in August 2009. After six months with HAU in Kampala, I moved to another of Hospice Africa's sites in Mbarara in the south-west of Uganda for a further six months. It was during my time in Kampala that I met Mhoira through working with her on the B.Sc. in palliative care as well as seeing patients at Mulago Hospital, and I became enthused about international palliative care. This was also helped by a fantastic trip to India where I helped Mhoira with a Toolkit training course in palliative care. As my year with HAU was coming to an end, I came to the conclusion that I wasn't ready to return to the UK to finish my training, and discussed with Mhoira the possibility of working with the palliative care team at Makerere. I have been extremely fortunate to receive support from Cairdeas to enable me to stay in Uganda and begin working full time with the palliative care team, as well as continuing the work I'd started with the B.Sc. through HAU.



I have a particular interest in hospital-based palliative care, especially developing the skills of non-specialists to be able to care for patients with palliative care needs. Over the next year I'll be working with Mhoira and the team to develop our programme of palliative care teaching for undergraduates and postgraduates, as well as continuing to be involved with the development and running of the B.Sc. in Palliative Care, run together with HAU. I'll also be helping Mhoira and Dr Liz to support the nurses in providing the clinical service for patients in Mulago hospital.

It's a great privilege for me to be able to take time out from my training to work in such an exciting setting. There is a huge need for palliative care among the patients we are seeing in the hospital and in the community; and to be involved in caring for these patients, as well as training others to assist with providing this care, is hugely rewarding. I hope that in the future I will continue to be involved in international palliative care education and training, and will remain a firm supporter of Cairdeas and the amazing work done through this organisation.

Aberdeen meets Kampala

In August last year a group from Gerrard Street Baptist Church in Aberdeen, led by their pastor, Mathew Henderson, went out to Uganda to visit Mhoira.

Our aim was to see for ourselves the work being done by Cairdeas and to bless Mhoira in whatever way we could. We visited Mulago Hospital and had opportunity to meet with the patients and their families and listen to their stories; this was a deeply humbling experience. We could not help but contrast all that is available in our hospitals here in the West compared with the shortages that exist there. Yet despite the difficulties the staff care for many sick and dying patients who are poor and come from rural villages in Uganda.

There was a strong sense of the vision, mission and values espoused by Cairdeas as we witnessed Mhoira's care and compassion for her patients. We observed her interaction with the staff and her efforts to build the team into a cohesive unit working together, offering hope and comfort in and through the love of God. Mhoira's work is

challenging and demanding not only in the hospital but also at university as she teaches students to degree level in palliative care. It was a privilege to spend time with her and to witness her deep sense of calling and desire to expand the work of Cairdeas to other countries so that palliative care will be available to all people who are dying and in pain. Mhoira's confidence and trust is in our awesome God who is faithful and loving and is able to do more than we can ask or imagine.



At a seminar on spiritual care of the sick

You can read more about their visit and see their presentation at uganda2010.org.uk

Degree in Palliative Care

The students, now back working in their home situations, are working hard to send in their assignments and are progressing well. We will soon advertise for the August 2011 intake.

We are delighted to be able to offer a Cairdeas scholarship to enable a nurse from Mulago Hospital to undertake the Diploma which includes training to prescribe oral morphine.

India

In February Mhoira Leng and Jo Dunn visited India, along with Nicholas Mellor, as part of our involvement in the Palliative Care Partnership.

Say 'Yes' to Palliative Care

The 18th International Conference of the Indian Association of Palliative Care with the theme of Networking in Palliative Care took place at the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences in Lucknow.

With support from Cancer Aid Society and HelpAge India, Nicholas Mellor organised the designing and printing of 2500 stickers promoting palliative care and, in conjunction with Rajveer Singh who is Leader of the Autorickshaw Association of Lucknow, arranged for them to be displayed on many of the autorickshaws during the conference. The stickers said: **"Freedom from Pain: Say 'Yes' to Palliative Care"**.



Dr Shakeel, Mhoira Leng and Nicholas Mellor with one of the autorickshaws displaying its sticker

They certainly made an impression, with the resulting press coverage prompting Harmala Gupta, President of CanSupport in Delhi, to comment "I think your idea to get scooter rickshaw drivers in Lucknow involved was brilliant. We may strive to do the same in Delhi. You have definitely left your mark on Lucknow and on us!"

Networking and training in palliative care – Challenging values and changing practice

This is the title of a paper Mhoira Leng presented to the IAPC conference. She emphasised that 'the goal of training is to change practice, not simply acquire knowledge; yet too often curriculums and assessment focus on knowledge and skills'; effective training must also address core values and attitudes.

Mhoira quotes a young doctor who said 'I wanted to see if the theory you were teaching worked in practice so I took you to see our most difficult case'. She needed to know if the training made sense out of the rarefied atmosphere of the classroom and back into the real world of pain, suffering and limited options in her daily work.

The paper was published in the Indian Journal of Palliative Care and is available on the Cairdeas website.

Palliative Care Toolkit Training

They were also able to support three other training events using the Toolkit as a resource: at the Malabar Cancer Centre in northern Kerala, at the Christian Medical College Ludhiana (associated with the CMC in Vellore) in the Punjab, and at Aligarh Muslim University.

It was great to have experienced national faculty such as Prof M R Rajagopal and Dr Chitra Venkiteshweren as well as colleagues Drs Shakeel and Sanjay from Lucknow involved, along with Dr Jo from the UK and Uganda, Dr Ed Dubland from Canada and Nicholas Mellor from the UK.



Faculty and delegates at Ludhiana

It is really encouraging to see how the message of the need for palliative care is continuing to spread within India, and an increasing number of medical institutions are beginning to include palliative care teaching in their training of doctors and other health care workers.

Malawi and Ethiopia

It is also encouraging to see how effective palliative care is gradually becoming more available in other countries. In Malawi Mhoira was able to meet seven of the nine students who are studying for the Diploma or Degree at Makerere University. They are all progressing well despite the many and various challenges they face.

In Ethiopia real progress has been made in formulating and distributing their own morphine, and in the development of palliative care services in Hospice Ethiopia and Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa. The Palliative Care Toolkit has also been translated into Amharic, and there is an active education programme for palliative care within several HIV/AIDS programmes. It is hoped that a national association for palliative care practitioners will be established before too long. All of this is encouraging, but much remains to be done to ensure that people have access to palliative care across this needy country.

Trustees

Dr Grahame Tosh FRCA FRCP

We are delighted to welcome Dr Grahame Tosh to our Board of Trustees.

Grahame has been a consultant in palliative care for 18 years, based in Southend, where he has built up a network of hospitals, hospices and community services which provide integrated palliative care services to a local population of about 750,000.

His interest in strategic service development has led him into management and for the last eight years he has been the Medical Director of Southend Hospital.

He has visited Mizoram in India, accompanied by his wife Cheryl, sharing his expertise with local health workers.

Grahame will be a great asset to Cairdeas and we look forward to getting to know him better and benefitting from his valuable input. You can read more about him on our website.



Grahame and Cheryl Tosh

David Knight

At the beginning of this year David Knight left his post in Aberdeen to practise as an orthopaedic surgeon in China where he has worked previously. Although this means he will be less involved in the day-to-day running of Cairdeas, we are delighted that he wishes to remain one of our trustees and continue to provide his valuable input as opportunity allows.

Latest News

Dr Julia Downing has just been confirmed as Visiting Professor in the Palliative Care Unit at Makerere University.

Congratulations to her and thanks for all she is doing to support the work in Makerere and beyond. We will hear more about her role in the next newsletter.