

SAFE

The newsletter of Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide



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Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide
White Lyon House, Marden,
Kent, TN12 9DR, UK

Tel +44 0 7527506969
info@safe4all.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 114854



Welcome

Due to the economic downturn, these are particularly challenging times for all charities and SAWW is no exception. Much of our income has come from donations following lectures or demonstrations at fundraising events. As gatherings of this type are currently banned because of the Corona virus pandemic, our principal source of revenue is severely diminished.

In normal times, respiratory support equipment, such as oxygen concentrators and mechanical ventilators, has been donated by SAWW, in response to requests from hospitals in developing countries. However, as a consequence of the Corona virus pandemic many more hospitals are in need of this sort of equipment than we can supply and it is unfortunate that, at the very time that the need for our help is greatest, we are least able to provide it. It is therefore essential that we support all recommended precautions so that the work of SAWW can resume at the earliest possible time.

Dr Roger Eltringham
SAWW Founder and Medical Director

Keeping Babies Breathing

The joyous parade of children on the front cover, was a celebration of World Prematurity Day on 17 November 2019 in Mbale, Uganda. Many of these children were alive thanks to the outstanding care they received at the local hospital.

Mbale Regional Referral Hospital is a centre of excellence for newborn care in Eastern Uganda. Just under 10,000 babies are born at the hospital every year, almost double the number born in an average hospital in the UK.

British paediatrician, Dr Kathy Burgoine, established a High Dependency Unit to deal with the smallest and sickest babies. SAWW supplied the unit with oxygen equipment and special breathing devices called Bubble CPAP that help babies with immature or damaged lungs to breathe and survive. The introduction of this equipment, together with improvements in care and staff training, has reduced the deaths of preterm babies from 52% to 11% in under three years. This is an impressive achievement for a low-resourced hospital.



Mothers provide Kangaroo Care to babies on CPAP



The 4 year old quads in orange T-shirts each weighed less than one kilo (2.2 pounds) when born at Mbale Hospital.

Simple changes, such as Kangaroo care, where mothers maintain skin-to-skin contact with their babies, have made a huge impact. Kangaroo care helps babies maintain body temperature, prevents infections, improves breast milk supply and encourages bonding with the baby.

On World Prematurity Day, Mbale Hospital held a party for the children who had been treated there as babies. Over one hundred families attended with their children, some of whom had weighed as little as 800 grams when born. Mothers shared their astonishing and often moving stories of premature birth and survival. The day was also an opportunity to raise awareness about the needs of preterm babies and their families. Our congratulations to everyone at the hospital who have shown what can be achieved in low-resourced settings.

Refresher Training in Tanzania

In Tanzania the scarcity of qualified doctors means that anaesthesia is usually administered by nurses or clinical officers. These non-physician anaesthesia providers often work alone with few resources and in challenging conditions that would intimidate many experienced doctors from wealthy countries. They do an incredible job but rarely get the opportunity to refresh their knowledge and skills.

To help remedy this situation, SAWW has funded two refresher courses for nurse anaesthetists in the Kagera region, a poor rural district in northwest Tanzania. The initial course in 2018 was the first anaesthesia training to ever be held in this remote region of the country. Anaesthesia providers from 16 different health centres across the region attended the event and participated enthusiastically. The three-day training course focused on safe obstetric anaesthesia to reduce maternal and neonatal deaths.



Practising intubation on a training manikin

The theme of the second course in November 2019 was anaesthesia for emergencies and trauma. With few hospitals, poor roads and limited transport, many complex cases are unable to reach referral hospitals quickly. As a result, emergency surgical procedures have to be conducted in district hospitals and health centres, where anaesthesia nurses must cope with the challenge of treating critical patients in a low resource setting.

The course, attended by 21 participants, included lectures, skill stations, simulations and informal discussions. Interactive training in a supportive learning environment ensured all the participants improved their knowledge and skills. Pre- and post-course assessments showed that everyone had enhanced their ability to handle some of the everyday challenges they face.



Photo: Running a simulation session

Whilst short refresher courses can never replace the need for formal anaesthesia training, they nonetheless provide an effective method of updating knowledge and boosting the capability and confidence of nurse anaesthetists to deliver safe anaesthesia in difficult circumstances. This SAWW-funded refresher course was approved by the Society of Anesthesiologists of Tanzania and the Regional Medical Officer of Kagera region.

Refresher Training in Tanzania - continued

For some nurse anaesthetists, the course was the only refresher training they had ever received. An important element of bringing these nurses together was enabling them to share experiences and establish support networks among themselves and with their trainers. We are truly delighted that since the initial SAWW course, there have been several further initiatives by other groups to support anaesthesia training in the region.

Our congratulations to everyone who completed the course and our thanks to all those involved in the organisation and teaching, including:
Philibert John and Jesca John, Kagondo Hospital, Kagera, Tanzania
Suzan P. Mbonde, Muhimbili National Hospital, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Dr Debora F. Madyedye and Dr Benard Kenemo, Bugundo Hospital, Mwanza, Tanzania
Dr Henriette Willigers and Dr. Michiel van de Wolf, Maastricht, The Netherlands
The Society of Anesthesiologists of Tanzania



Participants and trainers on the 2nd anaesthesia refresher course for Kagera region, Tanzania

Obituary: Dr Joel Kambale Ketha

It is with great sadness we report the death of Dr Joel Kambale Ketha on 28 March 2020. Joel was a SAWW scholar studying for a Master of Medicine in anaesthesia at the University of Rwanda.

Originating from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Joel was inspired to pursue a career in anaesthesia whilst working as a doctor at Beni Hospital in North Kivu. His life's mission was to improve anaesthesia and intensive care services in the DRC, where there are few qualified medical personnel.

Joel was highly recommended by his teachers, and his enthusiasm and dedication to anaesthesia were outstanding. It was a privilege for SAWW to have supported Joel and we are sure that he was an inspiration to others who will continue his work.

We extend our sincerest sympathies to Dr Joel Kambale Ketha's family and friends.



Dr Ketha at the All Africa Anaesthesia Congress in October 2019.

Anaesthesia in Challenging Locations

SAWW aims to ensure that anaesthesia is available whenever surgery is required, even in the most isolated, impoverished, and challenging locations around the world.

What is a challenging location?

Hospitals in low-income countries lack many of the facilities we take for granted in the UK. Outside of the cities and major towns, hospitals have few qualified staff, limited medical supplies and worn out equipment.

Supplies of electricity, oxygen and even water, may be unreliable or non-existent. Add to this the challenge of heat, humidity and dust and you can imagine how difficult it is for sophisticated medical equipment, such as anaesthetic machines, to function reliably. Temperatures in parts of Africa can reach 50C and air conditioning is an unheard of luxury.

Electricity supplies can be erratic and power cuts frequent. Fluctuations in the power supply can damage sensitive electrical equipment, which is not easily repaired without engineers and replacement parts.

During power cuts staff may need to work by candlelight and it is not unheard of for operations to be completed using light from mobile phones. Generators can help bridge this gap, but even these require fuel and maintenance by engineers, that are not always unavailable.

In many countries, oxygen gas is expensive and in short supply. Oxygen can account for up to half a hospital's annual budget, so it must be used sparingly. Some countries even need to import oxygen, which must then be distributed to hospitals across the country despite poor infrastructure and roads that disappear in the rainy season.

Such conditions make the work of the medical staff incredibly difficult and it is essential that they are given with the right tools for the job. SAWW only donates appropriate equipment that is designed to work in low-resource settings and will continue to function during power cuts and without medical gases.



Poor roads and infrastructure leaves remote hospitals isolated and makes access to healthcare difficult



Graveyards of expensive but unsuitable equipment found in many low-resourced hospitals.



Sustainable equipment donations need to be easy to maintain and service using local technical skills

Oxygen supply and COVID-19

Oxygen is an essential lifesaving medicine, widely used in emergency medicine and for treating pneumonia, but it remains a scarce resource in low-income countries. Developing world hospitals are often unable to meet the oxygen needs of their patients, sometimes with fatal results, and this situation is likely to be made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 causes pneumonia, and approximately 15 per cent of COVID-19 patients are classified as 'severe' and require oxygen therapy. Hospitals in wealthy countries have struggled to cope with the influx of patients with COVID-19, so the outlook for poorly resourced hospitals in low-income countries is bleak.

Such hospitals rarely have piped oxygen and rely on cylinders and oxygen concentrators. Oxygen cylinders are expensive, difficult to transport and run out. Oxygen concentrators provide an affordable alternative, as they are inexpensive to run and generate 97% pure oxygen from room air, which is a free and inexhaustible resource. A good quality oxygen concentrator costs £1,200 but it can generate over five million litres of oxygen each year, so the initial outlay is quickly recovered by the savings in oxygen it produces.

SAWW currently needs funds to supply oxygen concentrators to poor hospitals that are desperate to improve their oxygen supply for seriously ill patients. Each machine costs £1,200. If you can, please make a donation today using one of the methods on back page of this newsletter. Your gift will literally be a lifesaver. Thank you.

LEAVING A LASTING LEGACY

Leaving a gift to Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide in your Will can make a lasting difference to the lives of people in poor countries. Your gift will be used to supply an anaesthesia machine that will enable surgery to prevent disability and save lives. A single anaesthesia machine may be used up to ten times a day, transforming thousands of lives over its lifetime.

- **£14,500 will supply an anaesthesia machine suitable for use in a poorly resourced hospital.**
- **£3,100 provides a portable anaesthesia machine suitable for use in remote locations, or disaster response.**
- **£1500 provides a CPAP device to keep sick and premature babies alive.**
- **£200 supplies a pulse oximeter to improve surgical safety.**

Please contact us if you would like further information about leaving a legacy to Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide. Thank you.



A simple anaesthesia machine in a case, like the one depicted here, can enable life-saving surgery for adults and children in remote locations. This photo shows a child being prepared for surgery in Somaliland.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Fundraise from the comfort of your own home

SAWW relies on funds generated by supporters to continue its vital work. Now more than ever we need your help to raise funds whilst maintaining social restrictions in place due to the COVID-19. Here's a few ideas for you to try out and have fun.

Become a Virtual fundraiser

You may not be able to run a marathon or climb a mountain, but you can still meet a personal challenge at home on a treadmill, exercise bike or rowing machine. Set up your own fundraising page for us at Give as you Live. Share your fundraising activities on social media and please let us know so we can help to promote them.



Quarantine Quiz

Missing meeting your mates at the pub? Online quizzes are all the rage now utilizing conference facilities such as Zoom and Teams. You might organise a Quarantine Quiz and collect donations for SAWW to enter. Participants will have to provide their own drinks and nibbles!

Online Shopping

If you shop online, please remember to register with and use fundraising websites including: **AmazonSmile.co.uk** **GiveasyouLive.com** and **EasyFundrasing.org.uk** These sites will generate money for your selected charity without any extra cost to you. Be sure to select Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide as your chosen charity. Thank you.



Alternative Birthday or Holiday

If you are unable to enjoy a birthday, anniversary or holiday this year with family and friends, then why not invite them to donate to an online fundraiser instead? Together you might raise enough to supply a crucial item of equipment for a hospital in need or fund a specialist to complete their training in anaesthesia in a poor country. Donate online with Give as you Live or The Big Give.

theBigGive

HOW YOU CAN HELP



Worldwide 5 billion people lack access to affordable surgery and anaesthesia. As a result, there are 16 million avoidable deaths and countless disabilities each year. A donation to Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide will supply equipment and train staff to ensure anaesthesia is available for surgical treatment for those in need. Thank you.

MAKING A DONATION

theBigGive

- **Donate online** at TheBigGive.org.uk or follow the links from the [Donation page](#) of our website www.safe4all.org.uk/ways-to-donate
- **Online banking.** Donate directly to Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide at CAF Bank Ltd, sort code 40-52-40, Account number 00033087. IBAN GB87CAFB40524000033087. Please give your name as a reference and let us know you have donated.
- **Cheques** payable to Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide can be sent to us at the address below.
- **Standing Orders** help us to secure support to those in need. To make a regular donation, please contact us for a standing order form. Email info@safe4all.org.uk

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Thank you