

Report from the Pan African Training Programme in Paediatric Endocrinology

The programme for Fellowship on Paediatric Endocrinology and Diabetes in Africa promoted by the European Society for Paediatric Endocrinology (ESPE) and sponsored by the World Diabetic Foundation (WDF), finally started in May 2008. Fellows come from Nigeria (Kayode Adeniran, Jerome Elusiyan, Omotayo Adesiyun and Iroor Yarhere), Tanzania (Kandi-Catherine Muze and Edna Majaliwa), and Kenya (Paul Laigong' and Mary Limbe).

In the first week the role of tutors was shared by Ze'ev Hochberg (Israel) and Lorenzo Iughetti (Italy), after which Lorenzo continued until the end of May, then being replaced by Dana Hardin, Violeta Iotova, Marc Maes, Marek Niedziela, Ursula Kuhnle, Kerstin Albertsson-Wikland and Martin Ritzen, who will each spend a month in Nairobi. The three hospitals Gertrude's Children Hospital, University of Nairobi - Kenyatta National Hospital and Aga Khan University Hospital held a party for the fellows and tutors and in attendance were Dr. Sidney Nesbitt, Prof Aggrey Wassuna and Prof William Macharia.

From day one these hospitals have granted the programme permission to use their facilities and consult freely with their doctors. In particular the Kenyatta National Hospital Diabetes and Endocrinology Adult Clinic is a hive of activity, where we have the opportunity to see many children. We were warmly received by Prof Zipporah Ngumi, the Dean of Faculty. We would like to thank her for her assistance and suggestions on improving our programme in this setting.

The course runs for fifteen months, with clinic consultations, ward rounds, lectures by tutors, seminars, journal club presentations and a lot of deliberation between the fellows and tutors.

Ze'ev Hochberg opened the activities with very interesting lectures, coordinating clinics and steering the course. Moreover both Ze'ev and I have been involved in academic

activities in Nairobi University and in Aga Khan University where we gave public lectures that have been greatly appreciated.

Seminars and journals have been presented daily by fellows on pre-determined topics based on the programme syllabus. These are always criticised, commented on and clarified.

The publishers of *Hormones Research*, *Paediatric Diabetes* and the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* offer free access to their online journals, and *HR* and *PD* will also be providing hard copies. We thank them for their kind support. The efficient technical organization, managed by Beatrice Mwangi, permits us to present articles from these journals daily to keep abreast with the world. We are in the process of developing a website forum to consult African paediatricians on endocrine cases.

The sessions are usually very interesting and enlightening. Real and simulated cases are presented and opinions on management strategies are sought and commented on. Fellows also go through the cases in the ESPE website and they are always willing to learn and ask questions. Luckily everyone speaks English (better than the tutors do), so communication is not a barrier. The Nigerian fellows even go out of their way to learn Kiswahili so they can fit into the society at large.

Interesting cases have been encountered including some that many of the fellows are not used to or may have just read about in the books. Some patients do not understand or speak English, so the East African fellows help to interpret and at the end of the day, everybody goes home happy. With the help of the tutors, fellows get in-depth knowledge of the clinical features, short and long term complications and management strategies in different parts of Europe. Fellows also discuss problems which they themselves have encountered in their previous practices at home and methods of circumventing or improving on these are suggested for future references.

On Monday 19th May 2008, we all travelled to Embu, a beautiful city north of Nairobi to see a provincial hospital, under the auspices of Dr. Thomas Ngwiri. We did a ward round and had a guided tour of the facility. Furthermore we discussed with Dr Ngwiri

interesting data of clinical cases collected by him. The colleagues at Embu asked to be consulted via e-mail or telephone whenever there is a patient with endocrine problems.

This week the first month of our interesting experience will be finished and we are confident that the months to follow will be just as interesting.

As the first tutor of this programme my experience has been one of difficulty and I think it all boils down to the fact that it has been the beginning of the programme and we had many logistical problems which we had to overcome. I also have had to adapt my knowledge to a different way of life and conditions. In addition, the fellows have been very eager to raise awareness in paediatric endocrinology and diabetology. In particular they continuously have asked questions about the management of patients in the clinical setting, so the real clinical cases seen in the different hospitals are more important in this programme.

During this month, I have seen the increased capacity of criticism by my fellows: So, in my opinion, they are developing the best qualities to practice an excellent medical approach to paediatric diabetology and endocrinology.

Even if this period has been very busy, I will take away with me, the friendly and constructive atmosphere created with the fellows, their capacity of work with sacrifice and their sure will to improve the health of African children affected by diabetes or endocrine diseases.

Lorenzo Iughetti with Iroro Yarhere (Nigerian fellow)