

IUGA OBSERVERSHIP REPORT - Francis Githae Muriithi

SITE: MERCY HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN, HEIDELBERG, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR PETER DWYER

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My interest in Urogynaecology & Pelvic floor surgery started during my last year of residency at the Aga Khan University Hospital, Nairobi. I had by then assisted my consultant, Mr. Evan Sequeira in procedures for management of stress urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse. In an attempt to acquire more knowledge, I came across the IUGA website where I applied and was successfully awarded an observership grant.

Africa (other than South Africa) in particular is one of the continents with the least number of Urogynaecologists. The efforts such as training grants and the IUGA project in Ghana are most welcome. These help African gynaecologists develop urogynaecology and pelvic floor surgery beyond obstetric fistula surgery.

The application process and clearance process was smooth. It was excellently facilitated by Professor Dwyer's administrative team as well as the remittance of grant monies on time by the IUGA team.

My key objective was to get an overview of what a functioning Urogynaecology unit is like given that there was none in Kenya, and this was met. I also achieved the following:

- Attended outpatient clinics: incontinence, prolapse and pessary clinic sessions. I found my interaction with the Urogynaecology fellows Julio Alvarez and Kris Cvach very useful. They were excellent teachers and took time to explain the pathophysiology and basis of the various interventions we offered patients.
- Attended Urodynamics sessions and anal sphincter imaging
- Attended OR lists with Professor Peter Dwyer and other consultants in the team. The case mix was enriched by the lists at Mercy Hospital, Epworth Freemasons Hospital, Cabrini Hospital, and St. Vincent's Private hospital.
- Attended the Urogynaecology Society of Australia annual meeting in Sydney (at The Garvan Institute). This exposed me to a variety of research and clinical cases as well as an excellent Cadaver workshop at the Macquarie University.
- Attended Professor Peter Dwyer's lecture sessions to undergraduate students at the University of Melbourne.

From a social point of view, the cities of Melbourne and Sydney have very friendly people who are always eager to assist. The transport systems are very reliable. Historical and entertainment sites e.g the Melbourne Museum, Ancient churches, fireworks festival at River Yarra, Parks, Zoos are worth visiting. The food is excellent with numerous restaurants to choose from reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of Australia.

I am very grateful to IUGA for having provided me with this great opportunity to enrich my exposure in knowledge and skills, and to interact with great teachers of this discipline. I am very

certain that this opportunity played a big role in me being accepted for a Clinical Research Position at the University of Oxford's department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology - a post that shall commence in November 2013 for a period of 2 years. My time at Oxford shall be divided on a 50:50 basis between Clinical Obstetrics and Urogynaecology. I shall be happy to return to Australia if another opportunity arises, and assist in IUGA's activities aimed at promoting Urogynaecology and pelvic floor surgery in Africa.

My gratitude once more to IUGA and to Professor Peter Dwyer.

Photo 1: With Professor Peter Dwyer aboard the Blue Room Cruise, Sydney Harbour.



Photo 2: With Professor Ajay Rane of James Cook University.



PHOTO 3: With Urogynaecology Fellows, Dr Julio Alvarez and Dr Kris Cvach.

