



## IUGA eXchange Khartoum (The Sudan)

On the February 16 and 17, 2008 the IUGA eXchange took place in Khartoum, Sudan. It was the sixth exchange program since it was established in 2005 with the goal is to exchange knowledge and skills in urogynecology and reconstructive pelvic surgery and to improve identification of important female pelvic health issues in host-countries and to strengthen contacts to health care providers involved.

### Preparation

This exchange was prepared by Dr. Mohamed Siddig (gynecologist from the United Kingdom and Sudanese) and Dr. Harry Vervest (gynecologist from The Netherlands) at a meeting in Khartoum in November 2007. A scientific program was prepared together with a local organizing committee, formed by Dr A. Rahman Ali Eltayeb Elfaki (chairman), Professor Abdel-Latif Ashmaig, Dr Esam Gaffar Abdalrahman, Dr Maisoun A. Mohd.A. Takroui, Dr Sami Mahmoud Abdel-Khair, Dr Ali Gaffer, Dr Mohamed Merghani, Dr Mazar Osman Abuelgasim and Professor Taha Umbelli.

### Sudan

Sudan is a large country about the size of Europe with 33 million inhabitants. Around 12 million live in or in the neighborhood of the capital city of Khartoum. Gynecologists are mostly trained in The Sudan itself, in the UK or in Arabic countries. There are 300 to 400 gynecologists and most of them are member of the Obstetrical and Gynecological Society of Sudan.

Major urogynecological health issues are urinary incontinence, vaginal prolapse and fistulae. There is a major fistula center in Khartoum which was founded in the seventies by professor Abbo. It is the second largest in Africa and annually more than 500 operations are done. Professor Stanford and Dr. Vervest were welcomed at this center and spent two days discussing and participating in several fistula procedures. As IUGA recently established in a special committee on fistula, this visit was utmost worthwhile to get an impression about the surgical procedures, its causes and its social impact on women.



Khartoum, where the blue and white Nile Rivers meets



### Obstetrical and Gynecological Society of Sudan

The meeting was in conjunction with the Mid Term Meeting of the Obstetrical and Gynecological Society of Sudan, which covered a week of different scientific conferences on topics like infertility, oncology and colposcopy. These conferences were attended by gynecologists from all over The

Sudan. The IUGA exchange was the last conference of this meeting and 40 gynecologists were present. Special guests at this meeting were Professor Abdel-Latif Ashmaig (President of the Obstetrical and Gynecological Society of Sudan), Professor Anduslam Geñes and Professor Abbo who is a longstanding member of IUGA and was present when IUGA was founded in 1976 in Mexico City. Unexpectedly present was also Professor John Kelly (UK) who already comes to Sudan for fistula surgery for 39 years.

### **Scientific program**

The scientific program covered two days and consisted of plenary lectures by an IUGA faculty, gynecologists from the UK and gynecologists and one surgeon from The Sudan. As fistulae are a major health problem three lectures and one workshop covered this issue. Professor Abbo gave a historic overview of the fistula problem in Sudan and his Fistula Center. Dr. Abualgasim presented an impressive study on the social impact of fistula in The Sudan and Dr. Salh showed also impressive results of his fistula department in Darfour (West Sudan). The topic for the workshop was the management of incontinence following fistula repair. Next to this there were lectures on non-surgical and surgical management of stress urinary incontinence, overactive bladder, childbirth and its influence on the pelvic floor, how to communicate with the incontinent patient, current management of prolaps in The Sudan, recent developments in vaginal prolapse surgery and management of fecal incontinence. Another two workshops covered pelvic floor anatomy and physiology, and techniques of pelvic floor surgery. Furthermore, the staff of the Fistula Center presented four cases for plenary discussion.



### **Donation of urodynamic equipment by Laborie Medical Technologies from Canada**

Special in the scientific program was an urodynamic course. At the preparatory meeting in November 2007 it appeared that there was no urodynamic equipment in The Sudan. On request of

the IUGA Executive Board Laborie Medical Technologies from Canada was approached to provide urodynamic equipment. Mr. Ray Laborie who is long time participant in the "Friends of IUGA" program did not hesitate at all and immediately donated an urodynamic apparatus and send it by airmail to Khartoum. Also one of the staff members of the Fistula Center received a special training for this equipment at the Laborie facilities in Morocco.

### **Venue and faculty**



The venue for the meeting was the Center for Permanent Medical Education, a modern and very well equipped facility in the center of Khartoum with state-of-the-art computer technology and a highly skilled technician. The local faculty consisted of Professor Abbo, Dr. Adam Salh, Dr. Abuelgasim, Dr. Hassan Omer, Dr. Sahal, Dr. Isam, Dr. Khater, Dr. Siddig, Professor Taha Umbelli, Dr. Kanan, Professor Yahya, Dr. Ali Gaffer, Dr. A. Rahman. The IUGA faculty was formed by Professor Edward Stanford (Memphis, USA), Dr. Sohier Elneil (London, UK and originally from The Sudan) and Dr. Harry Vervest (Tilburg, The Netherlands).

### **A wonderful meeting**

This exchange in Khartoum turned out to be a well organized event and was well received by the faculty and the participants. The atmosphere was informal and there was ample opportunity for discussions during the meeting, but also during breaks and in the workshops. There was a great interest in and strong desire to learn about pelvic floor anatomy, function and disorders. The IUGA faculty was very much impressed by the high level of knowledge of participants and the often decisive questions and discussions. Participants were equally satisfied with the meeting as was shown by the high scores on the evaluation forms which they filled in. Participants were eager to learn new techniques and a follow-up on this exchange must focus on hands-on training on modern incontinence and prolapse surgical techniques. This exchange has certainly fulfilled the goals of the IUGA eXchange program.

At the end of the meeting many participants expressed their wish to become an IUGA member and a Sudanese Urogynecology Association was instituted and will become an IUGA affiliate society. The IUGA faculty likes to express its sincere appreciation for the generous hospitality of all members of the organizing committee and the participants.

In a following newsletter we will report on the Khartoum Fistula Center, the new urodynamic equipment and IUGA's initiative on forming a knowledge center on fistula around the world.

On behalf the faculty and the local organizing committee

Dr Harry Vervest