

*Saving lives
with clean
safe care at
birth*

Soap Matters

April 2016

Issue 12

Ethiopian Visit

In our last newsletter we reported on the upcoming visit of colleagues from Felege Hiwot Referral Hospital (FHRH); CEO, Mr Bizuayehu Gashaw and Medical Director, Dr Siyoum Enkubahiri. The primary purpose of the visit aim was to meet with colleagues from Soapbox, NHS Grampian (NHSG) and the University of Aberdeen (UoA) to further the on-going partnership to improve quality of care at FHRH, located in Bahir Dar in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia.

The trip, co-ordinated and facilitated by Soapbox Trustee, Dr Roelf Dijkhuizen, included visits to various departments within Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. These included the Maternity Hospital, the Infection Prevention Unit, and Quality Improvement and Health Intelligence & Research.

The programme also offered opportunities to



explore Aberdeen and experience some of Scotland's culture, with visits to Dunnottar & Edinburgh Castles, a ceilidh, and a tour of King's Chapel with the UoA's Professor Jane Geddes.

The visit culminated in a series of presentations to senior NHSG staff from Bizuayehu, Soapbox's Alec Cumming, Aberdeen clinicians – Dr Jolene Moore and Dr David Hurman, NHSG Interim General Manager for the Acute Sector– Gary Mortimer, and medical student Duncan Thomson, who have all worked with Soapbox in Bahir Dar.

Since returning home, and in the presence of over 2,500 people at the African Union Conference Hall, including country-wide representatives from all health sectors, FHRH received the prestigious recognition of Best Performing Hospital in the country, along with a grant presented by the Vice Prime Minister and Minister for the Ministry of Health!

The hospital passed the first step for the National Lead Hospital Competition in September 2014. Dr Enkubahiri reported that "finally the last two years' dream of the hospital has become successful".

We were delighted to hear this excellent news and offer our warm congratulations to our Ethiopian colleagues. We look forward to working together to continue making further improvements to the hospital in the coming years.

Hands-On Training for Domestic Staff

Many thanks to Liz McLeod who has recently completed her MSc Global Health and Management placement with us. Liz conducted a literature review on participatory methods of training with low literate populations to identify the key elements of taking such an approach to training.

Through a number of needs assessments

conducted across several countries, Soapbox has identified an alarming lack of formal training of domestic services or cleaning staff in low income countries and has developed a training manual in environmental hygiene and infection prevention that is to be adapted and piloted in The Gambia this month.

Training of these staff members has specific challenges as domestic services staff often have very little education and very limited reading

International Day of the Midwife

The 5th of May will see The Soapbox Collaborative joining the global celebration of the International Day of the Midwife. This is a hugely important day in our calendars, a day dedicated to saying thank you to the men and women who work tirelessly to deliver healthy babies.

Soapbox will be attending a student led conference at Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen on the 6th of May where delegates will have the opportunity to hear from various speakers from both the UK and further afield regarding current midwifery issues. Attendees will have the opportunity to browse the exhibits and speak to representatives throughout the day, including members of the Soapbox team. We will be there to discuss issues of hygiene in low-income country healthcare facilities and infection prevention at the point of birth, as well as providing demonstrations on hand hygiene and providing information on how to get involved with our work.

Tickets cost £10 for non-students, £7 for students, and £5 for Midwifery Society members, and can be purchased at www.rguunion.co.uk/shop.

Email e.treasure@rgu.ac.uk for more information about the conference.



Health, History, Hygiene and Hands

The University of York's Department of Health Sciences recently invited Professor Wendy Graham, The Soapbox Collaborative's Chief Scientific Adviser, to give a public lecture on the importance of hand hygiene at home and in healthcare facilities.

During the lecture Professor Graham explored the drivers and barriers to hand hygiene in the context of maternity units in low-income settings, where hygiene can make a difference between life and death.



The lecture, held last month as part of the prestigious Jim Matthew Lecture Series, was attended by around 50 students, midwives, academic staff and members of the general public. The topic generated much interest and a lively Q&A session was held after the lecture.

Emma Morrison, Soapbox's Scientific Project Officer, also attended the event which gave attendees the chance to try out interactive hand washing stations. Emma built a 'tippy tap' as an example of a simple and hygienic device to wash hands with soap and running water which is especially appropriate for rural areas in low income countries where there is often no piped water. The tap is operated by a foot lever and thus reduces the chance for bacterial transmission as the user touches only the soap. The tippy tap proved to be a great tool to continue the conversation about hand washing.



Midwifery students from the University of York; Charlotte Needham, Lucy Flatley & Katherine Ellery, were also on hand to demonstrate hand hygiene techniques using 'Glitter Bug'. Glitter Bug is a fluorescent lotion that, when used with a UVA lamp, makes it possible to see how well hands are washed by showing residual glowing in areas where bacteria, fungi and viruses love to lurk; areas which are commonly missed by ineffective handwashing techniques.

Soapbox would like to thank everyone who attended and supported the event making it a great success!

WASH in Healthcare Facilities

Report from Giorgia Gon, Soapbox Research Fellow, on the WHO/UNICEF/SHARE WASH in Healthcare Facilities meeting.

Last month's meeting on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in health care facilities organized by the WHO, UNICEF and SHARE and involving over 30 partners including Soapbox, was certainly for me the meeting of the year. Four days flew by where the participants had the chance to focus on the priorities needed to gather evidence to catalyse change around the topic of WASH in facilities – a topic that is finally emerging as a global priority.

Out of the presentations, the gem for me was hearing about the incredible national efforts to improve WASH in facilities in Zambia, Tanzania and India that are reaching hundreds of facilities in each of these countries, and a remarkable organisation crossing national boundaries – Infection Control Africa Network—that has been training over 7000 people working in infection prevention and control in Sub-Saharan Africa.

One of the successes of the meeting was the coming together of a variety of key stakeholders in the field – engineers and WASH experts, together with experts in universal health coverage, and quality of care improvement. The recognition of quality of care as the steering force of this group was emphasised, with WASH needing to be integrated in to the current

healthcare system to help this improvement process.

Key priorities for research were identified and Soapbox is strategically placed to support several of those including antimicrobial resistance, unpacking the transmission routes to hospital-acquired infection, training of cleaners, using microbiological surveillance for monitoring and improving environmental hygiene, and behaviour change.

The most telling component of all was that people came together for the meeting, as was emphasised repeatedly throughout, because they believe in this cause and the impact it can have on people's lives, because it is a matter of basic human rights, and most importantly "doing no harm". Through the week, one could almost see the passion and excitement driving the participants; it seems it was the meeting of the year, not just for me, but for many of them too.

Presentations from the meeting can be found at www.washinhcf.org



Microbiology Society Annual Conference 2016

Last month Soapbox's Scientific Project Officer, Emma Morrison, attended the Microbiology Society's Annual Conference in Liverpool. The conference is one of Europe's largest annual gatherings of microbiologists with over 1,400 delegates in attendance and more than 300 scientific presentations and posters.

One of the sessions focused on the rise of antimicrobial resistance, the implications of which will be felt the world over, with developing countries and large emerging nations bearing the brunt of this problem. The session linked with the release of a key document from the AMR Review which examines the central role that infection prevention and control, and surveillance need to play in combatting the rise of drug-resistant infections, and focuses on water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries.

Antimicrobial resistance has huge implications for the health facilities with which we work and the wider maternal and newborn health agenda, and is a topic Soapbox will be prioritising in future collaborations.

The packed conference programme offered a diverse range of topics from immunology and virology to the impact of climate change on infectious diseases.

