

UK Nurses Visit Nzega Hospital

We are five nurses from Kingston Hospital working in the Acute Assessment Ward. We had volunteered to go with the group from FUM to visit the hospital in Nzega. None of us had any idea what to expect, but we knew we would find that things were needed out there. We started fund raising and held a few cake sales, a fancy dress disco night and a charity live music night in Ireland. We managed to raise £5,000 and as we were paying for our own flights, all of the money was to be used in Tanzania.

On arrival at the hospital in Nzega, we were shocked at the sheer amount of need we could see, the lack of trained staff and the dedication of the staff that did work there. The condition of the buildings themselves was not good. Having no windows in the wards means that the greatest part of the day is spent fighting the losing battle with the dust that blows into all the areas. Cleaning is high priority for the staff. They have the knowledge, but what they lack are the resources. The only running water in the hospital is in the theatre block, so staff have to carry heavy water buckets to each ward to provide a supply of 'clean' water used for cleaning and hand washing. We found that despite the cleaning schedules on each ward, many areas had beds covered in old blood, dried urine and faecal matter. We spent one morning cleaning the beds in the paediatric ward, along with the drip stands and other equipment.

There are areas within the hospital that appear to be running well, with good record keeping and positive outcomes for the patients. These are the TB clinic and the HIV clinic, which has a programme to prevent HIV transmission from mother to unborn baby. They have had 9 successful deliveries this year where the positive mother has had a baby free of the virus.

One of the nurses did a training



The five visitors, from left to right in blue: Patrice Gallogly, Louise Taylor, Maggie Nicholas, Steve Roots and Kat Sheperd (front)

session with the students and staff on infection control and taking vital observations. This was good and was welcomed by the staff, but we found the lack of equipment hampered them more than lack of knowledge. There only appears to be one blood pressure monitor in the hospital, they are still using old-fashioned oral thermometers (which have a high risk of infection) and none of the nursing staff have watches to time respiration rates or pulses. Simple things, like a big clock with a second hand on each ward, would enable some of the more basic nursing tasks to be completed.

We spoke with Dr John and the Matron and asked what would be the best use of the money we raised. Due to the census that was

being taken at the time we were there, the government had frozen all monies to the hospital and the most urgent need at the time was for basic supplies of intravenous fluids, rehydration salts, catheters, etc. We arranged with a supplier to provide the equipment he had highlighted and arranged payment. We also had the pleasure of seeing the supplies arrive and were able to unload them and personally hand them over to the staff.

Overall the staff were welcoming and dedicated, we enjoyed our time there and would love to continue to be involved with your charity. Thank you for giving us the chance to experience everything.