

On Land and Sea

Update – May 8, 2011

Serving the people of Sierra Leone

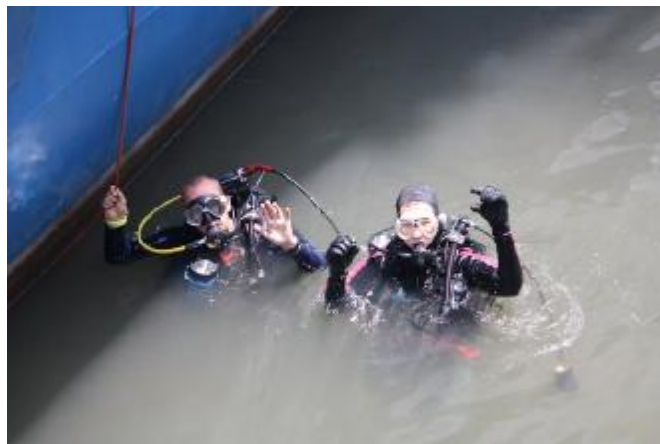
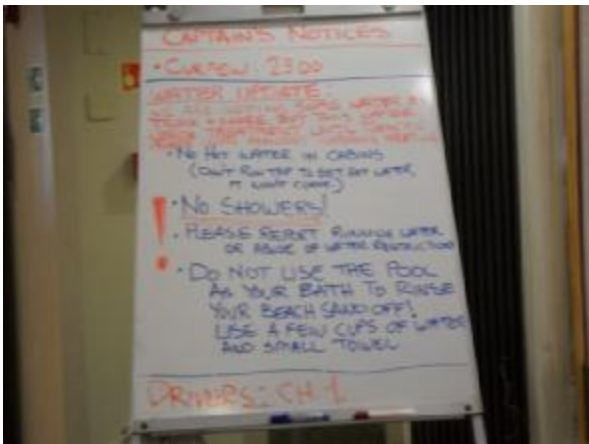
We're a couple of months into our service here in Sierra Leone. Here are some statistics for our initial 8 weeks:

- Surgery: 1045 procedures for **452 patients**
- Dental: 7665 extractions, 891 fillings, plus other procedures as well for **2405 patients**
- Eye: **1979 patients** assessed and/or treated, including 120 eye surgeries (mostly cataracts) on 112 patients included in the surgical procedure figures above.
- Lab: We have performed 2,734 lab tests on patients and crew and drawn 13 units of blood for transfusion
- In addition to these services we have palliative care nurses who visit patients with terminal illnesses, mental health specialists who conduct training seminars, agricultural specialists who train leaders to train others in techniques to improve production...

Challenges

Working and operating a hospital ship in a developing country poses some unique challenges. Since generally the infrastructure is not well developed, we need to be as self-sufficient as possible, but there are still things that must be obtained locally. One of these things is water. A few weeks ago we experienced an acute water shortage due to a break in the water main from which we obtained our water from the city. We had to take extreme conservation measures for a few days: no showers, no personal laundry, no use of the dishwasher in the dining room. We got showers back after a few days – **cold** showers. Our regular 2 minute showers with warm water were restored after almost a week... makes you really appreciate what you have!

We've had a couple of brief power losses, too, and some periods without air-conditioning. Those problems were mostly a function of the trash in the water around the ship which clogs up the intakes for water to cool the generators. We are situated at the mouth of a river flowing into the ocean and there's a startling large amount of trash flowing by. So we have divers who go down several times a week to remove trash from the intakes as well as crew in the engine room who are constantly clearing out debris.



Visitors

One of the things you soon find out about being on the *Africa Mercy* is that we have a lot of visitors to the ship. We've had a Medical Reception where leaders of the local medical community came aboard and a Civic & PR Reception where some of the local government & communications leaders were here. And periodically we have VIP visitors as well as those from local ministries. Often these visitors make at least a cursory visit to the lab and we get to meet them.



Greeting the First Lady of Sierra Leone



Meeting the US Ambassador, Michael S. Owen

Thank you all for your continued prayers and support. We are making a difference here! Continue to pray for the people of Sierra Leone, for our patients, and for our crew. Pray with me for lab staffing – my first two fellow techs left at the end of April and I now have one tech in their place and none yet scheduled to come when he leaves at the end of June. So pray for lab techs to respond to the call, as well as physicians, nurses, teachers, and other personnel who make this ministry possible. Maybe you would be the one to come!

Blessings!

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Note: If you'd prefer not to receive these updates, rather get them at a different email address, or know of someone else who'd like to receive them, just let me know! Feel free to pass this on to others who might be interested, too.

Financial Support

I serve as a volunteer and am reliant on the support of others for all of my expenses. If you are led to share in my ministry financially, please make checks payable to Mercy Ships and send to: Mercy Ships, Donor Services, P.O. Box 2020, Lindale, TX 75771 with a note designating for the support of missionary Claudia Juarez (#2793). Or, you can make a contribution online at:

<https://connect.mercyships.org/page/outreach/view/crewmates/juarezc>