



Early morning in Geneva

Global Health Elective Anca Matei

I had the opportunity to complete an elective at the World Health Organization Headquarters in Geneva in the spring. This experience provided me with a unique viewpoint on how a major health authority works to influence the lives of people around the globe.

I have been following the activities of the World Health Organization closely for years and have been interested in its efforts to improve the lives of people in low income countries. My previous experiences in a developing country emphasized, for me, that without rigorous data collection and analysis, outcomes cannot be tracked and measured, and progress becomes inefficient. For example, in Ghana, we presented a number of recommendations issued by the World Health Organization - and the data supporting them - in order to encourage the local hospital staff to improve their measurement tools, implement change, and track outcomes.

Working in the field would have been less productive without the efforts put forth by researchers at the WHO – and working at the WHO would have been meaningless without the field experience. During my elective at the WHO I was involved in a number of research projects, workshops, and seminars, and I was able to connect with a number of inspiring individuals. But most of my time there was dedicated to a multinational collaboration on preterm birth prevention. This project is a review of systematic reviews on preterm birth prevention, and aims to ultimately organize the heterogeneous evidence on the topic. Since the burden of preterm birth affects low middle income countries (LMICs) disproportionately, we will use the review of reviews to prioritize those interventions that would be most effective and sustainable in LMICs – like Ghana.

Overall, my elective was informative and eye-opening. I developed valuable research skills, I gained an informed appreciation of how the WHO prioritizes research objectives in reproductive health, and I learned more about the tools used by the WHO to translate current evidence into guidelines. Sometimes their effort is rewarded by a reduction in morbidity and mortality. For instance, the recommendations on postpartum hemorrhage or the surgical safety checklist translates into improved outcomes. Other times, their efforts are hindered by limited resources, sociopolitical landscape, or because the scope of work is very complex. Having a balanced view of their work helped me mature my vision of where I fit in the global health scene and what new skills I need to build to contribute to a creative effort to reduce health disparities.



WHO Intern Group

BETHUNE **ROUND TABLE 2016**



The Bethune Round Table (BRT) is an annual interdisciplinary scientific meeting hosted at a Canadian academic centre to discuss challenges and solutions to improving surgical care to under-served and marginalized populations in low- and middle-income countries. The objective of the BRT is to bring together health professionals from a variety of disciplines including surgeons, anesthesiologists, obstetricians, and nurses to share their research and experiences in the delivery of surgery in low-resource settings.

In June 2016, the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology hosted the Bethune Round Table in collaboration with the Departments of Surgery and Anesthesia, Pain Management and Perioperative Medicine. The theme of the 2016 course was “building collaborative teams to strengthen global surgery” including collaboration for clinical service, education, research, and advocacy. There were 132 people in attendance, representing surgery, anesthesia, obstetrics, nursing, and students. The international delegation included participants from Rwanda, Papua New Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, Gambia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Haiti, South Africa, UK, USA, Australia, and Canada.

We gratefully acknowledge the presenters, delegates, sponsors, and organizers who helped make this exceptional event a huge success. Next year, the BRT will be hosted by the University of Ottawa’s Department of Surgery. Hope to see you there!



Visiting Obstetrician from Ghana Completes Observership

In May 2016, the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology welcomed Dr. Jerry Coleman for a three week clinical observership. Dr. Coleman is an Obstetrician from Accra, Ghana and is a co-investigator on a study with Dalhousie medical student Allan Kember, for which Dr. Heather Scott is research supervisor. Dr. Coleman is one of only two clinicians doing obstetrical ultrasounds at the large teaching hospital where he works. They are gradually acquiring some equipment but the training available for fetal health surveillance has been limited. When Dr. Scott visited Ghana in 2015, she spent time with Dr. Coleman and realized offering him some focused training on fetal health surveillance would have a significant impact on the quality of care for many women in Accra.

Dr. Coleman's program in Halifax included hands-on teaching in the Fetal Assessment and Treatment Centre (FATC) and the Diagnostic Imaging Centre as well as participating in grand rounds, journal clubs, and the Maternal Fetal Medicine Symposium. He also spent time in the Prenatal Centre and the Birth Unit.

Dr. Coleman reflected on the diverse learning opportunities he was afforded during his observership:

At the Fetal Assessment and Training Center I was introduced to the concept of detection of soft markers of chromosomal abnormalities using ultrasound as well as its management. I learnt about integrated maternal serum testing and integrated prenatal testing and the diagnostic options available. I also learnt hands on more about fetal biometry and the use of anatomic land marks to accurately measure fetal growth using Voluson and Logic E9 ultrasound machines. I learnt more about ultrasound fetal Doppler, fetal echocardiogram, and biophysical profile. I had the opportunity of seeing various fetal abnormalities at these centers. I spent some time at the Prenatal Centre where I interacted with patients and learnt a lot about patient-centered comprehensive health care. What impressed me most was the level of information given to patients in the form of detailed handouts to inform them of their conditions and what is expected of them for a successful outcome.

Dr. Coleman was also the recipient of a full scholarship to the Bethune Round Table to present his research on *The Ghana Prenabelt Trial, An International Multidiscipline Collaboration*. His travel to Canada was funded through the conference. During his final week in Halifax, he was fully engaged with the other BRT scholarship recipients in a number of conference related activities.

Dr. Scott will return to Ghana this fall and will spend time with Dr. Coleman to review some of the things he learned while in Canada and discuss further mentorship for him as he continues to deepen his skills. He has expressed sincere gratitude to all members of the Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology for their warm welcome and all the excellent learning opportunities.



Dr. Jerry Coleman (centre) with other scholarship recipients to the Bethune Round Table 2016.