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**Overseas Specialist Surgical Association of Australia
(OSSAA)**



**Hospital Regional Eduardo Ximenes Baucau
Timor Leste**

Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery team visit

August 31- Sept 7 2024

Team report

Dr Vani Atluri
Dr Matthew Grill
Dr Ryan Breslin
RN Joy Booth
RN Amanda McFall

INTRODUCTION

This trip was initially planned for Dili, however due to the impending arrival of Pope Francis in Dili as part of the papal Asia - Pacific tour negotiations were undertaken to undertake surgery in Baucau rather than Dili. It was anticipated by executives at the Hospital National Guido Valadares (HNGV) that the cultural and religious significance of the pope's visit in Dili would impact on surgical activities. OSSAA has not had a team in Baucau since 2018 and this was viewed as an opportunity for OSSAA to re-establish relationships in Baucau and treat patients from the Baucau, Los Palos and Viqueque regions closer to their home.

Mr Mok Freitas and Dr Joao Ximenes (Dr Jx) took ownership of the organisation and logistics of the in-country aspects of the team visit ranging from the transport to Baucau, outpatient visits, team accommodation and negotiations with the local executives at the Hospital Regional Eduardo Ximenes Baucau. Following the change of plan from Dili to Baucau this was undertaken in a short space of time. No members of the visiting OSSAA team had been to Baucau hence, in-country support was an essential component of this trip.

TEAM PERSONEL:

The visiting OSSAA team for the visit to Baucau was as follows:

Dr Vani Atluri	Plastic and Craniofacial Surgeon Women's and Children's Hospital and Royal Adelaide Hospital, Adelaide
Dr Matthew Grill	Anaesthetist Women's and Children's Hospital Stace Anaesthetists, Adelaide
Dr Ryan Breslin	Anaesthetist Medstar Royal Adelaide Hospital, Adelaide
Sr Joy Booth	Theatre nurse Royal Adelaide Hospital, Adelaide
Sr Amanda McFall	Anaesthetic/Recovery nurse Women's and Children's Hospital

PARTICIPATING LOCAL STAFF AND COUNTERPARTS:

All planning and local organisation for the trip was managed in-country by Mok Freitas and Dr Jx and the executive of Baucau hospital. Dr Mark Moore contacted Dr Ana Magno at HNGV to request for Dr Jx and Mok to accompany the team to Baucau. Joy Booth contacted Mr Claudino Ximenes Director of Baucau hospital to establish introductions and official written approval.

Prior planning by the local administrators ensured that the team was well supported and the hospital staffed to manage outpatients on Sunday as well as the operating theatre and wards. All elective surgery was cancelled during the teams visit to ensure adequate beds were available. Dr Jx, our counterpart reconstructive surgeon and Mok accompanied the team.

OVERVIEW:

Planning meetings were held the week before by the local team to organise logistics and patient flow activities.

The team arrived in Dili on the Saturday afternoon flight and was met by Mok, who facilitated an uneventful passage through airport customs. Accommodation was organised overnight at the Plaza Hotel. Room costs for the team varied from USD \$85 - \$125. Sunday morning the team travelled to Baucau in Mok's car and one hire car. The OSSAA Bipolar machine and two boxes of IV fluids were taken from HNGV for the trip.

Social media was not used for advertising for this visit due to the tight planning timeline. All patients on the wait list were phoned by Dr Jx; alongside this the Baucau Hospital Director notified local community health centres to advise them of the team's arrival and OPD consulting day and times.

Dr Jx arrived early Sunday morning in Baucau and commenced OPD screening prior to the team arriving. The prior screening streamlined the process, and patients were assessed, triaged for surgical lists, or waitlisted. As the week progressed further patients arrived for consults and were assessed between cases and triaged for surgery or waitlisted.

Following outpatient screening the team progressed to the operating theatres to view the equipment and leave supplies. Set up was undertaken the following morning. One theatre was available for team to use the other theatre was kept free for local emergency procedures.

Surgery commenced on the Monday and continued for the next 5 days. All patients arrived at theatre in a timely manner, fasted with IV access insitu and consent form signed. The surgical ward staff were organised and efficient in preparing patients for surgery.

A morning team huddle was led by Mok each day; the Surgical Safety Checklist has not been introduced at Baucau and is a potential area to explore for the next visit.

Dr Vani and Dr Jx completed all cases over the 5 days together. All patients were anaesthetised by Dr Matt and Dr Ryan, no local anaesthetist was allocated allowing Dr Ryan the opportunity to have extensive hands on and immersion for his first team visit.

Dr Matt and Dr Ryan worked together to assess and manage all patients for their procedures under general anaesthesia. A local Nurse anaesthetist ably assisted most days. A local junior anaesthetic trainee also joined the team for one day and received some valuable paediatric airway experience. The new Lifebox anaesthesia monitor worked very well and was a welcome improvement on previous systems used by OSSAA teams. The only significant technical challenge encountered by the anaesthetists related to the Mindray anaesthetic machines which had older style vaporizers. This meant that the Sevoflurane bottles we had brought from Australia had to be carefully decanted into the only glass Sevoflurane bottle in the Baucau theatre complex. Without this glass bottle and refilling system on hand, it would not have been possible to fill the vaporizer on the anaesthetic machine and no cases could have been performed. In future, it may be necessary for teams traveling to Baucau to bring this older style refilling system with them to avoid this derailing the trip all together.

Staffing was consistent and well organised. Mr Mateus Da Costa head theatre nurse led the theatre nursing team that included Regina Josefa Ximenes, Tomas Pereira and Baptista da Costa. All were experienced scrub nurses and were confident scrubbing for procedures. Surgical counting was methodical and sustained for the week as was sharps management. As Baucau has a stable nursing workforce future visits can rely on having experienced and engaged nursing staff.

All patients were recovered by Sr Amanda in the Recovery area, which conveniently was immediately next to the theatre. This allowed close supervision and immediate access to both Dr Matt and Dr Ryan as required. Several nursing staff occasionally assisted Sr Amanda in recovery and some airway skills teaching was undertaken.

Most days operating was completed by 1730 and the day closed after the medical team completed their ward round together. The majority of patients were discharged the next day.

By the end of the 5 days operating the team completed twenty-four elective procedures. Unfortunately, two cases on Friday were cancelled as the patients did not arrive for surgery.

There were no delays to surgery due to the strong work ethic of the sterilising team who managed to keep on top of daily instrument tray turnarounds alongside drapes and gowns. No overnight sterilising was undertaken. Due to the confidence and experience of the scrub nursing team time was spent on this trip investing knowledge and skills with the sterilising team. The Baucau team use round sterilising tins for all trays and consumables as there is a major shortage of linen for drapes or wrapping. The main sterilising autoclave is broken so a water filled pressure steriliser is the only steriliser in use creating challenges with frequent wet loads. As with previous trips role modelling was utilised to navigate communication issues, generate interest and reproduce new behaviours.

Following up from the last trip recommendations, recently purchased needle holders, forceps and scissors were added to the 4 OSSAA instrument trays. Dr Jx was given two sets of instruments and consumables in the hope that he may have the opportunity to undertake some surgery before his impending trip to Cuba.

The hospital is positioned on the outskirts of Baucau some distance from the main town. Lunch was provided by the hospital each day and due to the condition of the roads and distance into town the team chose to eat the majority of their evening meals at the Hotel Realistic. The hotel was clean and comfortable with rooms costing USD \$30 per night. Hotel staff were helpful and accommodating when asked to push dinner bookings back due to later than anticipated finish time at the hospital. The team walked to the hospital most mornings a short distance of seven hundred metres.

On Friday after the completion of surgery the team were presented with traditional Tais from Mr Claudino Ximenes Director of Baucau hospital and warmly invited for a return visit with a request for annual visits.

The team left Baucau Saturday morning in Mok and Dr Jxs cars and had lunch in Dili and quick visit to the Tais market before catching the afternoon flight to Darwin.

A highlight of the trip and a special moment for the team was a large group of families and patients arriving at the theatre door with a birthday cake singing Happy Birthday to Sr Amanda.

SUMMARY OF CLINICAL ACTIVITY

Total patient consultations = 51

Total surgical procedures = 24

Cleft lip

Unilateral x 13

Bilateral x 6

Cleft Palate x 5

Age range

< 1 year x 11

1-2 years x 1

2-5 years x 4

5-10 years x 3

10+ years x 5

Gender

Male x 13

Female x 11

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Increased support for plastic and reconstructive surgery services in Timor Leste when Dr Joao Ximenes travels to Cuba to undertake his specialist qualification. This would include a scheduled visit to Baucau annually with the team accompanied by Mok or an interpreter.

Support refinement in management of wait list.

When booking rooms in Dili at Plaza hotel, specifically request standard rooms.

Take a selection of sterilising peel packs and Kinguard wraps.

Plan for managing Sevoflurane in Baucau.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Sincere thanks to the entire Baucau Hospital team for their efficient organisation and planning at short notice.

To Mok, who managed to ensure all logistics were managed and planned for in a tight time frame and set the standard for future visits.

Johnson and Johnson for their ongoing generous support of suture supplies, which enable the ongoing treatment of so many cleft cases.

Medtronic for anaesthesia supplies

Ansell for surgical gloves

Royal Adelaide Hospital, Medstar and the Womens and Childrens Hospital for supporting our team members to negotiate leave.

The Order of St John for their generous donation of the new Lifebox Anaesthesia monitoring system.

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Dr Ryan & Dr Matt in action



Sr Amanda in Recovery



OSSAA and Baucau team



Dr Vani And Dr Jx starting a case



Sr Amanda Happy Birthday smiles



Happy mum and baby ready for discharge



Team on their morning walk to the hospital



Dr Ryan And Dr Vani receiving a Tais from Hospital Director



Sr Joy working with the sterilising team