

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

**Royal Australasian
College of Surgeons
(RACS)**



**PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY
TEAM VISIT**

**Rumah Sakit St Damian and St Rafael, Cancar,
Flores, NTT**

8 – 16 March 2019

TEAM LEADERS REPORT

Dr Mark Moore, AM, FRACS

Plastic and Craniofacial Surgeon

INTRODUCTION

Following our OSSAA surgical teams successful return to clinical service and teaching at RS St Damian and RS St Rafael, Cancar, Flores in August 2018, it was pleasing to receive an invitation to follow up with another visit so soon after. Whilst the initial intention had been to combine a plastic surgical and an orthopaedic surgical team, in response to the needs of the community at Cancar on this occasion it was not possible, and the team was once again sent with a plastic and reconstructive surgical focus.

In advance of the visit, the team received the appropriate letters of invitation from the Bupati of Ruteng, and all remaining pre-visit arrangements were overseen by Sr Franseline, SSpS representing RS St Damian and Ms Anastasia Stain on behalf of OSSAA. This included an approach to PERAPI for an accompanying local counterpart consultant plastic surgeon.

The timing of the teams mission in the wet season, on this occasion proved the defining determinant of many of our activities- heavy rains in the lead up to our arrival washed away the main road between Labuanbajo and Cancar dramatically altering how we travelled to and from, whilst also disrupting the travel plans for many patients from the western end of Flores, who were unable to reach RS St Damian.

TEAM MEMBERS

OSSAA team

Dr Mark Moore – Plastic and Craniofacial Surgeon
Dr Vani Prasad Atluri – Plastic and Craniofacial Surgeon
Dr Andrew Wallace – Anaesthetist
Dr Matthew Grill – Anaesthetist
Sr Vanessa Dittmar – Theatre nurse
Sr Amanda McFall – Recovery nurse
Ms Anastasia Stain – Coordinator / Interpreter
Dr Steve Cook – Surgical registrar / Observer

Counterparts – RS St Damian / St Rafael

Dr Vini Fortunata Rahardja – General practitioner – Bajawa
Dr Natalia , SSpS – General practitioner – RS St Rafael, Cancar

The nursing staff and assistants at St Damian and in the operating theatres of St Rafael, Cancar.

ITINERARY

Friday 8 March	Depart Adelaide for Denpasar
Saturday 9 March	Depart Denpasar for Labuanbajo. Met by staff of St Damian, and transferred to truck to commence 8 hour trip via alternate road to Cancar.
Sunday 10 March	Patient consultations – 60 patients assessed and preliminary operating lists constructed. Operating theatres prepared Dinner at St Damian with the sisters and representatives of the Health department and the Social Welfare Department.
Monday 11 March	Operating lists commenced – 11 cases
Tuesday 12 March	Operating continued – 10 cases
Wednesday 13 March	Operating continues – 10 cases
Thursday 14 March	Operating continues – 8 cases Team visits Liang Bua cave, and thereafter dinner with the SSpS sisters in their central residence in Ruteng.
Friday 15 March	Depart Cancar for Labuanbajo – 4 hour road trip past multiple road slips and landslides. Afternoon and evening in Labuanbajo
Saturday 16 March	Depart Labuanbajo for Denpasar, and onward flights back to Adelaide.

OVERVIEW

With our most recent visit to Cancar being completed 7 months ago, the preparation for this team seemed very uneventful and straightforward as we prepared to depart Australia. Only the question of whether there would be a local Indonesian plastic surgeon to accompany the team was still unresolved- this being addressed by Sr Franseline and Dr Nova Primodina with PERAPI.

Air travel to Indonesia occurred on this occasion via Melbourne on Qantas resulting in fewer issues with excess baggage or baggage non- arrival. Having settled in Denpasar on Friday evening, we were made aware of heavy rains in

west Flores resulting in the main road between Labuanbajo and Cancar being impassable because of road slips and landslides. Arriving in Labuanbajo at lunchtime on Saturday, we were met by the staff of RS St Damian and advised of arrangements made to transport the team to Cancar via a secondary road across the northern side of Flores. Following lunch the team, accompanied by a patient and other assistants in the back of a truck, seated on bench seats for 8 hours arriving late at 10.30pm. Along the way we experienced a number of challenges, traversing rivers, and overcoming slippery and treacherous stretches of rain soaked roads/tracks – nearly losing Dr Vani off the side of a steep incline, and at times relying on the 'Dr Wallace traction control' to assist the trucks bogged and spinning wheels !! Great driving and teamwork by the local staff eventually saw us delivered safely to the confines of RS St Damian.

Given the late arrival consulting did not commence until early Sunday morning. The assessment clinic was performed in the Physiotherapy building at St Damian, as is usual, starting about 8.30am. A total of 60 patients were presented for review, with most being new cases. The number was a little down on our previous visit, as many patients from the western end of Flores also experienced the same travel difficulties that we did, and were not able to make it to Cancar. The most common condition assessed was once again cleft lip and palate – by week end 28 patients with clefts were seen. A number of these cases were less than two months of age and thus not suitable for surgery on this visit. Among these cases were two who were being fed via nasogastric tubes, this being very unusual here, as it is rare here in Australia. Both cases were very underweight, and it was felt that the tube feeding was contributing to this – this was discussed with Sr Franseline who was going to address this issue with local midwives. Several cleft patients who had their lip repair by our team in the past returned for palate repair.

There was a scattering of congenital and acquired hand and foot anomalies – accessory digits and syndactyly, as well as burn deformities most of whom were operated on over the following days. The burn cases included long standing burn scar deformities of the face, neck and hands, requiring release, excision and full thickness skin grafts and local flaps.

Several patients with large facial tumours arising in bone were also presented – there was a woman with a large ameloblastoma, and another man with what appeared to be a fibro-osseous tumour of the midface. Both need further detailed radiological workup and treatment in a more sophisticated facility – Sr Franseline was going to explore the options for referral elsewhere in Indonesia as a first option. Another case of a young lady already treated in Bali in 2018 for a large midface and nasal mass causing hypertelorism was seen – she still has symptoms and was again referred back to her treating surgical team in Bali.

The team completed our clinic mid afternoon allowing time to visit and prepare the operating theatres at St Rafael- both anaesthetists on our team having previously worked in Cancar meant this preparation occurred quickly.

Sunday night saw a dinner with the sisters of St Damian, the SSpS provincial sister and representatives of the local social welfare and health departments to thank and recognise our team. We were also joined by Dr Vini Fortunato, a local Indonesian medical officer presently working in Bajawa, who was to remain with the team throughout the week.

The surgical lists began on Monday morning and were to continue through till Thursday afternoon. There were sufficient cases for two lists a day and in total 39 patients were operated on – only one case was deferred due to a coincident respiratory illness. Several of our old cleft lip patients returned to have their cleft palate repaired (see photo in report).

Among the patients we were very happy to see was Paskalis, who we have reported on previously. After severe burns to his lower limbs as a child, we have in the past released and skin grafted these to allow him to upright and walking. Two years ago we were saddened to see that he had undergone a below knee amputation after an injury and infection. Last visit we revised his amputation stump allowing him to now wear a prosthesis, which frees him from crutches and allows him to work like everyone else at St Damian – he assisted us during our clinics, and was photographer and later guitar and keyboard player when the local patients and staff entertained the team.

Throughout the week the team was ably assisted by Dr Vini, a young Indonesian doctor presently working in Bajawa, who has aspirations to be a plastic surgeon. She contributed to care of the patients by surgical assisting and with her active involvement in the ward aftercare of the patients. It was also useful having Dr Steve Cook , a plastic surgical registrar of a similar age , who could share his experiences of training with Dr Vini. We wish her well and would support her in future training endeavours.

All cases went to St Damian for their post-operative care – this was overseen by a small cohort of nurses and other support staff assembled by Sr Franseline. There were no early postoperative issues allowing all cleft cases to be discharged on day one or two after surgery. The group of burn contracture cases and those hand cases requiring skin grafts were kept in longer and will have physio and splintage under the direction of Ferdi and the other physio staff.

The staff at St Damian once again made a plea for an Orthopedic surgical team to visit, as there remain many patients with bony and limb deformities, both congenital and acquired who are in need of assessment and surgical intervention. We will endeavour to source a team to start to satisfy this need.

With fewer patients able to get to Cancar the workload was completed by Thursday mid afternoon. After tidying the theatre, storing equipment and making an inventory consumables to be left behind, there was time to visit the Liang Bua cave complex and then the SSpS provincial facility in Ruteng where we had our farewell dinner.

Our travel arrangements altered as the week went on, due to uncertainty about the status of the main road through to Labuanbajo. Initially we planned to drive on to Bajawa, further east and then fly back to Labuanbajo, but by Thursday we were informed the road was reopened and allowing passage of normal passenger vehicles. Accordingly the team set off with St Damian staff in three vehicles, arriving in Labuanbajo after about 4 hours. There were multiple landslides and slips in the road, and reconstruction of the road still ongoing to allow passage of passenger and freight vehicles. Safe arrival mid-afternoon in Labuanbajo allowed the team to refresh and relax prior to departure to Denpasar the following day.

Prior to departure at the Labuanbajo airport the team was introduced to Ibu Julie Sutrisno / Levico, the wife of the Governor of NTT, who voiced her thanks and gratitude for the work done by the OSSAA teams over the years, and offered assistance to us on any future visits. Transit through Bali saw the team arrive back in Australia on Sunday.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Once again the support of the sisters and staff of RS St Damian and St Rafael was essential to the success of the visit. Similarly the dedication of the OSSAA team members with all the travel issues thrown at us on this visit was exemplary.

CLINICAL SUMMARY

Total consultations :	68
- cleft patients	28
- burn patients	9
Total surgery :	39
- cleft surgery	16
- burn surgery	6
- tumours/ lesions	9
- hand/ foot	5
- scar revision	2
- keloid injection	1



The OSSAA team travelling by truck from Labuanbajo to Cancar



Road washouts and challenges en route to Cancar



7 month old with bilateral cleft and palate infant undergoing primary cleft lip repair



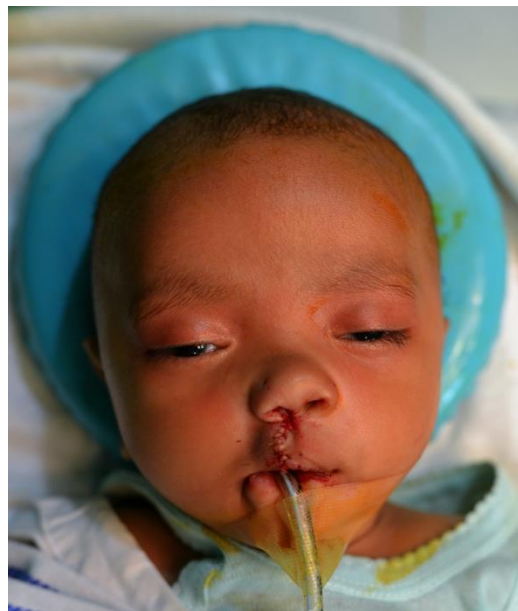
Bilateral cleft lip repair performed in 2013



Long term follow up – prior to surgery in 2013 and review in 2019



10 year old girl with haemangioma of the upper lip, where there has been incomplete involution, treated by wedge excision .



Infant with right sided complete cleft lip and palate having lip repair



OSSAA team with local counterpart operating theatre staff at weeks end



More inspirational Cancar 'graffiti



Cancar to Labuanbajo road with major slips



Sunset in Labuanbajo, Flores