

INSIGHT

Southern
Africa Project

Training reports of the supported ophthalmologists



From the beginning of February, the Covid cases in Eswatini have finally taken a dip. The Covid hospitals are emptying and everyone is getting a much-needed breather. Now as we approach the end of March, we have finally received news of the first vaccines arriving on Eswatini soil.

Teaching the Rural Health
Motivators to identify cataract

Our work at the Good Shepherd Hospital Eye Clinic has also picked up. We have been surprised again and again how far people will travel to get help for their sight. A number of patients have even crossed borders to get to us from

South Africa and Mozambique. In this pandemic, this is a big leap of faith for our patients, not even being certain that we can indeed help them, they risk the trip in desperation for their sight. Trying to keep this in mind, we do whatever we possibly can to help them, sometimes even performing surgeries on days that our theatre is not normally open or adding another patient to an already fully booked theatre slate. I am enjoying learning a more patient centred approach from Doctor Pons whose motto is along the lines of 'there's always room for one more!' GSH Eye Clinic is a refreshing atmosphere, in stark contrast to my past experience of medicine where the opposite is true. The patient needed to work around a nearly entirely inflexible, un-caring system.



Monday Sight Flight Team

I was happy to successfully complete part one of my diploma examinations, which was held in Durban, South Africa. The second part of the examination has unfortunately been delayed until May, but I am working to keep my study resolve and look ahead to the next hurdle, which is to apply for FC primaries in Ophthalmology.

The highlight of March has undoubtedly been the Sight Flight outreach with Mercy Air. 5 days, 9 clinics and over 500 patients screened for cataract and presbyopia. I so enjoyed the 20 minute flight to a clinic far in the rural corners of the country. It was thrilling to see the beautiful Kingdom from the air, so

green from the unusually high rainfall we received this past summer. Screening for cataracts in the field is a real challenge due to poor facilities and generally not being able to administer dilating drops to patients. We all so enjoyed the use of the portable slit lamp as it brought a piece of familiarity into the foreign space! A big thank you to Fight4Sight for this amazing equipment!



Examining patients on Sight Flight



The two trainees on our surgery day

The EDEFS Project is also making headway as we produce a first-of-its-kind educational video about diabetes and its complications, in siswati, the local language. I have so enjoyed collaborating with other NGOs on this as well as working with our wonderful, locally trained screeners. I have been overwhelmed by their initiative in this.

Looking forward, we anticipate another exciting month, with a second Sight Flight outreach planned for the middle of the month to make up for time lost thanks to Covid.

Dr. Emma Johl

February/March 2021

