

## Dok Elma's E-musing February 2011

February seems to be productive in different ways. The Annual Conference has been successfully held here in Ganta, with around 15,000 attendees and guests from United Methodist Churches from other West African countries and the US. I can only attend the morning Bible Studies which were excellently led by Rev. & Rev. Crissman of NC. At that time I was wondering if the sheep ever think about other things when they are in green pastures and still waters. Next day I listened to the Crissmans' discuss about us followers of Christ being both sheep and shepherd. God is always full of surprises. I also met the Liberian President Helen Johnson Sirleaf, who came not as president but as a United Methodist.

This month also the 1st doctor, Dr Willicor, went to Kenya for his personal medical concerns and I was left alone. We had to stop elective (non emergency) cases because it is next to impossible for one MD to run this 150-bed hospital. Still I have operated on 115 patients, of which 19 were Ceasarian deliveries. This prayer bulletin was weeks in the making, therefore delayed in coming. Dr Willicor has arrived back in Liberia but from the airport he proceeded

to be admitted to a nearby hospital.



It seems to be a season for twins because in a span of 1 week I delivered 3 sets (see picture). This is my first time to welcome to the world these many twins. Last January there were 9 sets of twins! All of them are strong and well. Much as I am awed by these, I am exhausted, needing sleep and feeling restless. Coloring my hair didn't occur to me but I keep getting olfactory hallucinations- instead of fuel, I smelt of 'tocino' (processed, salty- sweet pork). Maybe I should just color my hair before I start seeing things! Toward the last week relief came and I was able to get my 8 hours of sleep. One Liberian doctor was gracious to do alternate 1 week- straight night calls. And as the number of done cases increase, the complications also increase. These problematic patients drain my energy faster than being on my feet all day. During one procedure, I punctured myself really bad when the suture needle went straight into my finger. I

have started taking HIV prophylaxis and so far no untoward side effects.

Please pray for OR team, our patients and us doctors. Extra prayers for Dr Willicor- for correct diagnosis to his illness and healing.

There has been a steady stream of Ivorian refugees brought here for medical care but thankfully only one old woman who is a direct war casualty. She was running away from the fighting when a big branch fell and hit her right thigh breaking her femur. Well I would like to tell you of a 26 year old Ivorian man who had a chronic ulcer on his right leg. Iric has been brought to different bush doctors, clinics and hospitals in his country. But the progress he had was from an ulcer of the right leg to swollen leg; to black, dry gangrene of the right foot; to weeping, foul smelling right lower extremity. They got to the border and were brought here by an NGO (Non Government Organization). By the time I got him my only option was to do an AKA (above knee amputation). I did just that after meeting with the mother and the patient. Iric's mom comes to our chapel service every morning. The first few days she was requesting prayers for strength and guidance. Then later on she praised God for Iric's recovery. She even brings other patients' relatives to the chapel service, giving witness to

God's faithfulness and encouraging others to trust in Him. Iric remains in good spirit and keeps a happy outlook. After 3 months, he will be ready for prosthesis fitting. Let's pray that something will be available at the right time.

War is always devastating. Continue praying for Ivory Coast, and the Arab countries especially Libya. My heart broke when I heard over BBC short wave a Libyan man who recounted their ordeal. I imagine running towards an ambulance hoping to get medical help, only to find that the ambulance carried armed men with orders to kill. Please Lord intervene quickly for all the oppressed.

I'd like to remind you that friends at Ridgecrest UMC are helping me to get this prayer bulletin to you. (Thank you John Veazey and Laura Miller) You can directly email me dokelma@yahoo.com or Facebook or call me +231-880 673586 (EST +5hrs) Thank you for all your love and prayers.

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