
Programme Report

Project : His Majesty's Voluntary Project
Programme Title : Free Consultation Programme by Belgian Nephrologists
Date : 12th – 21st April 2016
Venue : Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital (JDWNRH)

1. Introduction

Dr. Tom Cornelis and **Dr. Sven Smets** from Belgium visited Bhutan in 2013. Their short visit at the National hospital and dialysis unit in particular caught the duo's attention to revisit the country. Inspired immeasurably by the concept Gross National Happiness (GNH) and determined to augment it through their proficiency and free services, the Nephrologists' visit this time received immense support from His Majesty's Secretariat as a part of the King's Voluntary Project.

As the only Civil Society Organization in the country advocating for services and care for people with kidney related and non-communicable diseases, the Bhutan Kidney Foundation (BKF) has relentlessly put its effort in collaborating with relevant organizations to make the services accessible to those affected by the disease. With the continuous guidance and support from the Office of Gyalpoi Zimpon, the Foundation in parallel partners with the Ministry of Health, JDWNRH, Faculty of Nursing & Public Health and other relevant organizations to improve these access and quality of health care. Thus, the BKF played a lead role in facilitating eight days of consultation services jointly with JDWNRH.



Figure 1: The Belgian Nephrologists; Dr. Sven Smets (L) & Dr. Tom Cornelis (R)

2. Programme Summary

Collaboration has been an instrumental approach that resulted in successful conduct of consultation programme. All the patients were arranged on appointment basis broadcasted through **Bhutan Broadcasting Services (BBS)** which the firm supported by announcing for three consecutive days; free of cost under Corporate Social Responsibility. Besides the scheduled programme, three patients received consultation in Paro on request.

Consultation Programme: With the space and technical support from JDWNRH, the BKF coordinated and facilitated the nephrologists' service for eight working days. The consulted patients included kidney transplant recipients and volunteer kidney donors, dialysis patients, and acute renal failures (Diabetes, Hypertension, kidney stones and others) from all parts of the country.

Presentation for dialysis nurses: A half day presentation was conducted for the dialysis staffs based on the subjects (Vascular Access; Blood Flow/Dialysate Flow and Dialysate Composition) proposed by the nurses themselves.

Meetings & Discussions: Few meetings (formal & informal) were organized which enabled the organizations involved to discuss on the issues, opportunities and measures to improve/upgrade Nephrology care in Bhutan. The meeting also provided a platform for the Nephrologists to report their observation and recommend on general kidney health care.

Concurrently, the hospital's lone nephrologist gained additional knowledge through joint consultation and occasional discussions.

While the BKF and JDWNRH jointly facilitated the services, the Office of Gyalpoi Zimpon played an important role in arranging and funding the Nephrologists' accommodation in Thimphu.

3. Programme Outcome

Date	12 th April	13 th April	14 th April	15 th April	18 th April	19 th April	20 th April	21 st April	Cases Seen	Total
No. of pts. consulted	34	45	42	41	48	26	36	23	1. Transplant Recipient -	31
Total No. of pts. consulted = 295									2. Dialysis Patients -	108
									3. Acute Renal Failure -	131
									4. Kidney Donor -	08
									5. CKD stage II, III & IV -	17

- 3.1. As a primary objective of the programme, a total of 295 renal (kidney related) disease patients availed the services. The consulted patients exceptionally commended and expressed great satisfaction on the quality of service received.
- 3.2. **Improved and Strengthened Partnership:** The JDWNRH management highly regarded the BKF's existence and its contribution to the health sector and Country at large. Figuratively, the common concern shared and shouldered pertaining to kidney health care improved working relation between the Foundation and the hospital.
- 3.3. **Established potential International partner for improved nephrology care:** Commending the knowledge on nephrology care and dialysis in Bhutan despite the issues with resources, the Belgian Nephrologists pointed out that health care and services for Nephrology department in Bhutan can be improved and upgraded by collaborating and working together with countries such as Belgium, where knowledge and resources are available with good context and partnerships.
- 3.4. **Developed comprehensive and uniform data collection form:** As a part of the Nephrologists' recommendation, a simple and comprehensive form was designed for dialysis unit for the compilation of dialysis patient report. This report maintenance is expected to generate complete and exact figure of kidney patients which would greatly benefit the BKF in future projects.

While local expertise on kidney and dialysis care were enlarged through appropriate guidance and exchanged knowledge; recommending through their week long services and observation, the Nephrologists iterated on the importance and significance of introducing certain facilities such as Peritoneal Dialysis, nocturnal dialysis for young patients, kidney biopsy and drug level monitoring in Bhutan which would save considerable outflow of resources on health economy.

4. Conclusion:

Comprehending the potential benefit that the Bhutanese kidney patients and National Referral Hospital can garner from this project, His Majesty's Secretariat has unwaveringly supported the Nephrologists' visit and their service in Bhutan. The 8 days programme at the JDWNRH highlighted important dialogue on the need to improve kidney health care in the country collaboratively with potential international partners established.

Through the consultation programme complimenting the service of JDWNRH's lone nephrologist, the BKF is optimistic to have amplified the Nation's treasured Gross National Happiness as witnessed and expressed by the beneficiaries. With series of discussions and need identified for kidney health care, the Foundation is hopeful that relevant organizations in collaboration with the international partners will be successful in establishing an independent Nephrology Department for better and quality nephrology care, thus, stimulating happiness the Nation so richly deserve.

Report compiled & submitted by: Bhutan Kidney Foundation

Glimpses from the programme



Figure 2: The Nephrologists examines the patients.



Figure 3: Patients awaits for their turn at diabetic clinic, JDWNRH.



Figure 4: The Nephrologists consults the patients in Bhutanese attire.



Figure 5: Dr. Smets on his round at dialysis unit, JDWNRH.



Figure 6: A patient expresses her gratitude after the consultation.



Figure 7: The Nephrologists presents their observation & recommendations to JDWNRH management, dialysis staffs and the BKF



Figure 8: The presentation for dialysis nurses at JDWNRH