

Highlight: A Successful Fistula Repair

Forty years ago, Nur Ayesha first noticed the urine incontinence. A woman from Ramu, Cox's Bazar, she was deeply suffering from this complication. It was caused by obstructed delivery. Nur Ayesha gave birth at home, as most all women in this rural area do, and was attended to by a traditional birth attendant. Lacking proper medical attention, she was in labor for **six days!** Nur Ayesha took every initiative to find relief. Throughout the process she was hospitalized at several hospitals but they lacked an experienced surgeon to perform the surgery. Ayesha's husband left her believing she was a cursed woman. Her neighbors gave the same reaction. After forty long years of suffering, she was



Nur Ayesha enjoying her new life fistula free!

referred to HOPE Hospital and a surgery was performed. She did not have any hesitation to be treated at this hospital and took the services into her full confidence. Today, Ayesha is **completely cured** and is following all the instructions of the surgeon. She is very keen to work in her community to let other fistula sufferers know that this is curable. She is a happy woman now! - report from HOPE Hospital

Announcing a New Partnership to Begin in 2013

HOPE is proud to announce a new partnership with **Smile Train**, an organization that works all over the world. Smile Train provides cleft lip and palate surgeries, trains doctors and medical staff as well as administers post-operative treatments such as speech therapy, dentistry and orthodontics. Smile Train is the worldwide leader in cleft repairs for the needy, having provided surgery to **850,000** needy patients worldwide.

Smile Train will help to pay for a local surgeon to attend the Hope Hospital on a monthly basis, to repair cleft lip and palates. Professor Bijoy K. Das, a noted plastic surgeon, with his associates, will conduct the surgeries at HOPE hospital. Having a local doctor perform the surgeries will help with the post-surgical needs of the patients since many require occupational and speech therapy in order to recover fully. Many of our current patients are in their teens or are already adults, having lived with the difficulties of cleft for many years. HOPE Hospital is becoming more known for treating cleft in the area, our aim is that babies born in the Cox's Bazar District with cleft will come directly to the hospital for **timely treatment**.



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Announcing the Start of Hope's

'Community Midwifery Training Program'

On January 28th, 2013, the Community Midwifery Program began with the students attending their first class. This program is the **first** Bangladeshi Government recognized Midwifery program in all of Bangladesh! Sponsored by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), HOPE will train and graduate **250 midwives over the next eight years**. The end goal of the program is to provide a supply of midwives that will be trained and capable of working in rural areas where there are no emergency medical facilities for delivering babies. The students who were chosen for this course are all local girls, living in and around HOPE Foundation medical centers. This helps ensure that once they graduate, these trained midwives will go back to their own communities and help deliver babies as independent practitioners or at the HOPE Clinic near their homes. They are also free to work at other medical facilities. However, by selecting girls who are living in rural areas they are more likely to stay in their communities to work and provide services to the rural women who are most at need. The use of trained midwives working with mothers while pregnant, during delivery, and postpartum, will facilitate a safer birth process. It will also ensure adequate maternal and child nutrition, family planning and assist in treating complications. A greater access to midwives means more lives are saved, both mothers and babies!



HOPE'S 1st Midwifery Training Class.



Program Director, Mrs. Ismat Bhuiyan from BRAC, monitoring the Midwifery students' recruitment process.



Midwifery students in class.

Kate Grant, Fistula Foundation CEO visits HOPE's Third Fistula Camp!

From **November 4-12, 2012**, expert fistula surgeon, Dr. Steven Arrowsmith, returned to Bangladesh to conduct HOPE'S **third** Fistula Camp. Dr. Arrowsmith initially led a Fistula Camp in April of 2012, and committed to return. This camp was made possible by our partner, **The Fistula Foundation**, USA. During the camp, **Kate Grant**, CEO of The Fistula Foundation, visited HOPE hospital and one rural HOPE medical center to meet the patients and assess the needs for fistula care in the area. The Fistula Foundation is the world's largest private charitable foundation supporting fistula care in 19 countries. Ms. Grant met with the community members, patients, and families and assured to provide continued support from her foundation to address this great need. During prolonged childbirth where emergency c-sections are not available,



Kate Grant, CEO of the Fistula Foundation visits a recovering fistula patient.

the intense pressure causes a small hole—a fistula, to develop between the birth canal and the urinary tract, or the rectum causing constant urinary and/or fecal incontinence. In Bangladeshi villages there is no access to ambulance or emergency c-section so most births are at home at the hands of untrained birth attendants who encourage premature bearing down as soon as labor pains begin. This painful labor can last for days. The mother is too poor to go to a hospital for help, fearing medical costs. The baby dies inside the mother. Obstetric fistulas result in incessant, lifelong incontinence if untreated. The smell and the social stigma result in husbands abandoning their wives and eventually these women are ostracized from their communities. **24 surgeries** were completed by Dr. Arrowsmith during his 9 day camp. Our concerted work did not go unnoticed! Dr. Mahmood, Kate Grant from the Fistula Foundation and Dr. Arrowsmith were interviewed on NTV Bangla: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ep0bRQg7ASK>

Dr Gary Jacques and Karen Jacques from HOPE WORLDWIDE visit HOPE Foundation

November 17-19

Dr. Gary Jacques and his wife Karen Jacques, both from **Hope Worldwide**, made a special trip to Bangladesh to visit HOPE'S Hospital. Hope Worldwide, a humanitarian organization based in Philadelphia, operates in **17 countries** offering healthcare services and education to the underserved people. Dr. Jacques is the VP of medical affairs in his organization and he expressed a desire to help HOPE's hospital through future collaboration. During the visit Dr. and Mrs. Jacques visited Hope Mothers' Clubs in the villages and also met with Board members and international volunteers. He also provided suggestions about different aspects of clinical activities and how to improve services in resource-poor settings such as rural Bangladesh. Dr. Jacques has previously served in Cambodia for 5 years as a volunteer physician.



Advice from the Field: A Special Interview

Dr. Arrowsmith has now visited Cox's Bazar Hospital for Women and Children twice to conduct obstetric fistula surgery camps. In total he has performed 45 surgeries at Hope's Hospital. Dr. Arrowsmith came to Hope as a world renowned surgeon, who has completed extensive obstetric fistula repair work, mostly in Africa. After obtaining some experience in fistula care for the region in which we serve, we wanted to hear from Dr. Arrowsmith himself how we could improve and what the situation is currently like in the region.



1. Did you find with your visits, that more women were educated that obstetric fistula could be repaired? Do you believe there are additional measures that can be taken in communicating this vital message to the community?

"I think that the only message that fistula women will truly trust is the word of a woman from her area or village. Each time a woman is treated with dignity and respect at Hope Hospital, she will share with her community that this is a place to be trusted. Whether in isolated island communities, the nearby refugee population, or simply in poor areas surrounding Cox's Bazar, the women themselves will get the word out. And all indications are that there are many women with fistula in this region."

2. Given your extensive experience correcting fistula in Africa, how do you find fistula in Bangladesh compares to fistula in Africa?

"The style of dress is different, the language and cultures are different, but tragically the stories are the same. Fistula is a symptom of poverty and as such should move all of us who are not poor to action. I find Dr. Mahmood's heart for the poor in this part of Bangladesh to be an inspiration."

3. How can HOPE Foundation improve on their obstetric fistula program?

"Hope Hospital has already come a long way from Dr. Mulu's first visit. Now the biggest step in growth is to begin routine fistula services, that is have fistula repair a part of something that happens day after day, rather than during special "camps". This allows the staff to rapidly become experts at what they do. It makes it possible to discover challenges in fistula care and solve them in a unique, Hope Hospital way. It builds a basis a trust in the community and among foreign funding agencies."

4. Can you please share one patient's story that really resonates in your mind?

"I have a photo taken with me and a group of fistula clients who are about to leave for home. It took me some time to notice a small detail in the photo that makes me treasure this picture above many others. I am sitting in the center of the front row, and behind me, an elderly patient has rested her hand on my shoulder. In a conservative cultural environment physical contact of any kind between the sexes is taboo. Yet, somehow through the work we did for her, through the way we treated her as a real person with real needs, she came to accept and trust me enough to not be afraid, and, importantly because of the amazing openness these brave women show, she was willing to break the law and let me know that I had been accepted as a friend."

"Fistula is a symptom of poverty and as such should move all of us who are not poor to action." - Dr. Steven Arrowsmith

SMILE BANGLADESH Corrects Cleft in 60 Children at HOPE Hospital

November 29th - December 4th, HOPE Foundation's partner Smile Bangladesh returned to Cox's Bazar to hold a **third** Cleft Camp. The mission was led by Dr. Shahid Aziz, a maxillo-facial surgeon from New Jersey, and a long-time friend of Hope Foundation. Dr. Aziz brought along a team of 15 professionals to complete **60 operations**. Throughout his 3 visits to HOPE, Dr. Aziz has performed 164 surgeries! The change Dr. Aziz makes in these children's' lives is incredible. Read the story of Imtiaz Hossain Babu below to fully understand the difference cleft surgery makes.



Story of Imtiaz Hossen Babu - A Cleft Survivor:

Imtiaz Hossen Babu was born with cleft lip and cleft palate and he required surgery. Babu is the second of three children living in the outskirts of Cox's Bazar town on a hill with a risk of having their house demolished by the landslide during monsoon at any time. It was obvious the family was unable to pay for his vital surgery. A team from HOPE foundation visited Babu at his home and came to know about his present condition and his parent's lack of a plan regarding his deformity. Due to our efforts, Babu's parents were educated about the cleft lip and palate surgery camp at Hope hospital and registered their child; they continued to keep themselves in touch with the HOPE hospital officials. Imtiaz Hossen Babu



Imtiaz Babu's picture: before and after surgery. Thanks to Dr. Aziz and his team!

was one patient treated by Dr. Aziz during his visit. At age four, his lip is finally repaired. Babu needs another surgery for the deformity of his palate. Still Babu cannot speak. He will undergo surgery for his cleft palate in a second phase of surgery and reconstruction. His parents are very hopeful that their child will be able to live a happy life with a lovely smile. Follow Imtiaz's success story; we will update you after his second surgery!

- report from HOPE Hospital

ReSurge International Team Visits Hope

ReSurge International, a California-based organization, visited Hope from January 21-23, 2013.

ReSurge works to treat and offer rehabilitative surgery to burn and trauma victims. Almost all of the burn victims worldwide reside in developing countries. One of the main reasons for the high occurrence of burn in countries like Bangladesh, is because women and children use open fires for both cooking and for providing lighting for their homes. If not treated, severe burns can heal improperly, attaching body parts to the incorrect area as well as depleting functionality. According to ReSurge International, "More children in South Asia die from severe burns than from HIV/AIDS, malaria and respiratory disease". This is an immensely neglected global health issue that needs far greater attention. ReSurge International works to operate on those victims who have lost the use of body parts due to burn and trauma, and restores those areas so that the individual can have a better quality of life. Last year alone, ReSurge completed **2,250** burn surgeries. HOPE is delighted that ReSurge International decided to visit our hospital and are considering a future collaboration with Hope!



Dr. Scott Corlew, Chief Medical Officer of ReSurge International, examining a child.

HOPE Attends the Asian Culture Festival: March 2nd and 3rd!

The Asian Culture Festival, an annual celebration of Asian cuisine, tradition, entertainment and so much more, was held in the Fruit & Spice Park in Homestead, FL on March 2nd and 3rd. Hope Foundation was there both days, representing Bangladesh and the Foundation. The Festival was a great success, due in part to the wonderful volunteers and also due to the wonderful support of the community. We were able to fundraise and get out in the community. Most importantly, we helped to educate those in attendance about the work that we do, and the different conditions that we provide healthcare for. Hope Foundation was additionally able to meet with many medical professionals in the area that voiced their interest in volunteering at Hope Hospital and medical clinics in Bangladesh! We are grateful to the Thai-American Association of Florida for putting together another wonderful festival this year. A special thank you to our volunteers: **Salma Khan, Grazy Banegas, Nazifa Kadery, and Noshin Islam,**



Dr. Nada Al- Naji Interviewed about her Work at HOPE

After graduating from medical school, Saudi born Dr. Al- Naji decided she wanted to serve those in need. After learning about HOPE's work, she committed to working at Cox's Bazar Hospital for Women and Children for a two month period, in order to fulfill her desire to help others. Dr. Al- Naji kept a blog (in Arabic) which can be found here: <http://nadaalnaji.blogspot.com/> and was interviewed by Arab News by Arwa Al-Rikabi. Here is a short portion of the interview. The rest can be read here: www.arabnews.com/?i-always-had-passion-humanity.

What did you learn from these two months in Cox Bazaar?

"It definitely taught me a lot about myself and other people. The main theme for me was: *Wherever you go, people are the same*. We all know that intellectually, but when you go to different places and directly connect with people, it really inspires you. You realize that no matter what nationality, color, religion, or race we are, we possess similar type of feelings regarding to happiness and sorrow. It just makes you become more expansive in how you see the world and other people.

Another thing I learned was how sobering it is to live in places where most necessities are not available. This feeling makes you more content with your current standard of life."



What was the most shocking thing to you during your work?

"It was to see children dying when they could have been saved if the parents were made more aware, or if better medical and transportation services were available. It is heartbreaking to watch a six-month-old baby die in front of his parents because what he needed wasn't available at the hospital. The nearest large hospital in that area is almost three hours away."

What are your future plans?

"For now, my plan is to tell my story. I want to encourage other Saudis to adopt the same path of working voluntarily in the parts of the world. It has been a great experience for me. I am blogging about my work in Cox Bazaar trying to share my impressions, feelings, lessons, and stories"- Arab News.

Special Note

Dr. Nada Alnaji has kept in touch with the hospital and collected over \$7,000 dollars in donations from friends and family to repair the roof of the hospital.

HOPE thanks Dr. Al-Naji for her wonderful kindness and generosity

HOPE Foundation's Special International Visitors



Kate Grant, CEO of Fistula Foundation and Dr. Arrowsmith with HOPE team



Smile Train, HOPE's new partner at the hospital.



VP of Hope Worldwide Dr. Gary Jacques visited to see our work!



Karen Jacques from Hope Worldwide visited HOPE's Mothers' Clubs.



Dr. Ekaterine, Pediatric volunteer at HOPE.

We Need Your Support to Continue our Work! Please send your tax deductible contribution to:

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You can also donate online by visiting our website: www.hopeforbangladesh.org

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