

## **Dr. Douglas Lungu**

### **General Surgeon from Mzuzu Central Hospital, Malawi**

Dr. Lungu has been trained as General Surgeon at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Afterwards he worked as Director of Clinical Services at the Ministry of Health in Malawi and as general surgeon and hospital director in Lilongwe. He is lecturer at the College of Medicine.

Dr. Lungu supported the program manager Peter Jiskoot with the on the job training of Clinical Officers in surgical procedures in District- and Mission Hospitals in Malawi, Central Africa (2005-2011).

Together they present:

#### **From On the Job training towards a BSc degree course in surgery for Clinical Officers in Malawi**

Dr. Douglas Lungu, surgeon (Malawi) and Dr. Peter W. Jiskoot, surgeon (Netherlands)

#### **Background information**

On the job training and learning is a growing trend in teaching institutions throughout the world. The combination of work and learning allows for immediate opportunities to reinforce the information that is learnt in a didactic setting.

In 2005 a pilot project has started in Malawi called: "On the job training in surgical/gynaecological procedures for Clinical Officers working in Mission- and District Hospitals". Dr Peter Jiskoot, who has worked in Malawi, was the architect of the project.

The College of Medicine reviewed the "On the job training" and concluded: "there is total unanimity in support of the training program, which is seen to improve surgical skills, increase confidence, reduce referrals to central hospitals and improve patient care as the quality of care has improved in the visited hospitals". The European Union has indicated "On the job training" an innovative initiative which might be used in other countries with shortages in human resources.

#### **Rationale of the training**

Malawi has a chronic shortage of human resources for health. This has a significant impact on health, with high maternal mortality rates.

As in other African countries Clinical Officers provide the bulk of the surgical/obstetric/trauma care in Malawi. Many patients who present at rural hospitals require treatment for elective surgical conditions as well as surgical emergencies. But many of such hospitals in Malawi have no surgical specialists and are staffed by Clinical Officers who have inadequate surgical training.

Most of the surgical procedures are performed by Clinical Officers in District/Mission hospitals are in obstetrics. And due to lack of appropriate surgical training, patients with common surgical conditions are referred to the overloaded Central Hospitals.

Therefore the upgrading of surgical knowledge, attitude and skills of Clinical Officers in District/Mission hospitals would address this problem. It will ensure that high quality surgical care will be provided by trained and licensed COs and so the majority of surgical procedures would be performed in District- and Mission hospitals.

It is against these backgrounds that Malawi has decided to offer Clinical Officers a specialized Bachelors degree course in Surgery, which has started in 2013.

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