

Fred Hafasha, Uganda

Fred Hafasha is Clinical Officer at Mutolere Hospital, Kisoro District, Uganda. The Dutch surgeons Ronald Vierhout (Mulolere Hospital) and Peter Reemst (Maxima Medisch Centrum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands), worked together with him and invited Fred Hafasha to present the following talk:

Trauma care by Clinical Officers in Rural Uganda

Background:

Management of fractures and bone related diseases seem not to be popular in Uganda, especially in rural areas amongst Ugandan doctors. This may include most Ugandan surgeons. This is why at our independence era in 1962 the Institution of Orthopaedic Officers was established. An orthopaedic officer is a clinician who is trained in fracture treatment and general bone diseases.

After qualification the officer is supposed to have sufficient knowledge and skill in:

1. Conservative and some operative treatment of fractures
2. Treatment of most soft tissue injuries
3. Prevention and correction of deformities like club feet
4. Knowledge about orthopaedic diseases such as bone trauma and infections
5. General overview of trauma care including diagnostics and shock management.

Aim:

To present possibilities and challenges which are encountered during the daily work as an orthopaedic clinical officer

1. Inadequate means of transport in our hilly region
2. Financial inhibitions - 90% of our population belonging in the less than one dollar a day group
3. Late referrals from other health facilities (also from Rwanda and DRC and other hospitals)
4. Prolonged treatment with local medicine by traditional healers.

Several causes of increasing incidence in trauma are presented.

Some various examples in trauma treatment possibilities are shown, as well as treatment of osteomyelitis and burns.

Conclusion

An orthopaedic clinical officer plays a key role in trauma care in Uganda, especially in rural communities.