

Africa Partners Medical 2006 CME Conference in Ghana, West Africa

The Africa Partners team of 26 doctors, nurses, computer specialists and other volunteer personnel traveled to Kumasi, Ghana from October 6-15, 2006 to present a continuing medical education conference from the 9th through 12th of October. The conference was co-sponsored by U.S. Navigators-Africa Partners, Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi, and the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons, and led by Dr. Lewis Roberts.

Faculty for the conference included Mayo Clinic and other physicians from the US, a Ghanaian epidemiologist and a Ghanaian nurse anesthetist from the US, several Ghanaian medical school faculty, and other West African physicians. The team also included volunteer information technologists and trip administrators. The conference was attended by medical school faculty physicians, and residents, medical students, and many nurses from Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital. In addition, there were Ghanaian physicians in private practice and several physicians and residents from other West African countries including Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, and Mali. Overall, approximately 150 physicians attended the conference.

Didactic sessions at the conference addressed advances in diagnosis and management of sickle cell disease, malaria, heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, metabolic bone disease, hepatitis B, liver cancer, lung diseases, chest x-ray interpretation, obstetrical ultrasound, and regional anesthesia, among others. Several hands-on workshops were presented to physicians and nurses. These workshops provided instruction on basic and advanced life support, abdominal ultrasound, upper and lower gastrointestinal endoscopy, breast examinations, and echocardiography. The workshop on basic life support taught by Brian Tommerdahl, an EMT instructor from Minneapolis, was very popular since most doctors and nurses in Ghana do not receive formal training in this area.

This was the fifth CME conference since 2000, sponsored by U.S. Navigators-Africa Partners Medical. The first CME conference was offered at Jos University Teaching Hospital in Jos, Nigeria in 2000, and was hosted by Dr. Orkurga Malu, a gastroenterologist and Dean of the Jos University Medical School at the time. Since 2002, annual CME conferences have been at Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital in Kumasi, Ghana.

The CME conferences are sponsored by the US team, their families and friends. Donations have been used to purchase medications, medical supplies, and medical education materials that are donated to Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, local physicians and clinics, and to attendees with medical clinics throughout West Africa. The materials used to teach the basic life support course were donated to Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital for Ghanaian physician and nurse instructors to use in teaching these skills to their colleagues and physicians and nurses in training.

Trip participants met several Navigators West African physicians, including Dr. Edith Clarke, an occupational medicine physician who started an eye clinic with her ophthalmologist husband for underserved patients in Accra, Ghana, Drs. Orkurga and Keziah Malu, who founded Adoose Hospital in Jos, Nigeria, Dr. Felix Kohol, who has just completed building a new clinic focusing on maternal and child health in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, and several physicians from Ivory Coast.

The Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons has invited U.S. Navigators-Africa Partners Medical to continue to send teams of physicians, surgeons, and nurses to Ghana to hold yearly medical education conferences. U.S. Navigators-Africa Partners Medical anticipates continuing to help meet the medical educational needs of West African health care professionals in the future by sending teams of medical professionals from the U.S. The goal of Africa Partners Medical is to partner with African health care personnel to prevent needless death in West Africa. Your continued support and contributions to the efforts of Africa Partners Medical are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

The Africa Partners Medical Team



Part of the 2006 CME Team at Elmina Castle, Ghana

Below are a selection of photographs and comments from participants:

I write to express my appreciation for the opportunity to attend the Africa Partners collaborative CME programme in Kumasi last month. Our return trip by road was as exciting as our coming. I am presently at a secondary health facility in a rural part of Plateau state, Nigeria and am finding application for the lessons taught at the meeting. I have found the slides and discussions on sickle cell anaemia particularly helpful.

I wish to thank you and the other members of your team for reaching out to us.

May the LORD richly reward your sacrifice.

Magnus



Anesthesia workshop in the operating room

We wish to thank you very much for all the encouragement and moral support we have received from you over the years till now. Being part of the CMEs has always been a special experience for me and my friend Joseph. And this year's CME was very special to us because of the introduction to echocardiography. Send a special thank you to Dr. Wendschuh on our behalf for being so dedicated in teaching us echo. We are also very grateful to the Mayo ultrasound group for the echo text books. And finally to Dr. Shields for being so kind to me.

Sincerely,

Yaw Amo Wiafe, RDMS



Dr. Norman Davies teaching obstetric ultrasound

Greetings from Jos. It was nice seeing you in Kumasi. As usual the program was very good. The residents from Jos were really appreciative of the program. Thanks for all the efforts and sacrifices towards the CME program for West Africa. May the Lord bless you and all the team members.

Many thanks,

Comfort Daniyam



Basic Life Support workshop

It was a pleasure to be involved with you all during our recently concluded CME conference in Kumasi. I wanted to send a quick note to thank all of you for making my time so enjoyable, and it was a pity that it ended all too soon. My first ever trip to Africa was a resounding success and I hope to return in the near future.

Fond regards,
Abhi



Workshop on breast cancer screening

I just want you to know how grateful we are for all the interest and effort both of you continue to show in continuing medical education in West Africa, and the effort you put in making sure these programmes run successfully, including providing sponsorship for so many people from Nigeria. Thanks for everything.

We look forward to the conference next year. We also hope that we will have something to work on in the mean time. Is there an ongoing research in hepatology or a new study we can put together and work on? Hope you are able to find some funding we can use to do such research together.

I was so happy when Steve Yohanna gave me a CD on ultrasound from you! I did not know you had brought one until he told me just before we left. I have looked through it on my laptop and it is excellent. I am sure it will be useful to so many people in learning ultrasonography.

Thanks a lot.
Orkurga



Dr. Luke Wolff's trauma care workshops will hopefully improve care for patients such as this one