Report on FIGO Educational Activity in Sudan
28 February-1 March 2012

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Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development. (Koufi Anan)
**Introduction**

The first educational activity on Minimal Invasive Surgery was conducted in Soba University Hospital, Khartoum, Sudan. It was a resounding success due to many factors that collated over a period of time. The drive by FIGO, the sponsorship by Olympus, The choice of the country, Faculty and Candidates all contributed to this unquestionable achievement.

This workshop has set the optimal standard for future activities by FIGO.

The objectives have been met and the litmus test passed with flying colors.

**Agreement with FIGO and Olympus**

The Consultancy Agreement reflected the commitment by all parties to education and training of doctors and the willingness to reach out for them wherever they are. Such commitment will reflect positively on women's health and well being, as advocated by FIGO

**Workshop**

**Dates:** 28 February - 1 March 2012

**Venue:** Skill Centre at Soba University Hospital.

The Centre was spacious, well equipped and had different halls for various functions. It also had an adequate Lecture Hall and an excellent E- Learning Centre. The future development plans are soon to be implemented to include an animal lab.

The staff were efficient, cooperative and always pleasant. There is no doubt that they will reach optimum standards with time and exposure. As the centre continues to grow, more secretariat and coordinators will be needed to ensure expected high standards. The IT personnel and Biomed were always available and performed well. More will be needed as the centre continues to grow.
Dr Magid Salah AbuBaker, Director of the Skill Centre, was highly professional. His amiability, efficiency, and conformity played a key role in the success of the workshop. He was always present and responded promptly to any immediate need. He certainly kept us and candidates in line with the time.

**Faculty: Represented as**

1. Director of the Workshop, **Professor M A AlSheikh**
2. International Faculty **Drs S A Moghraby, Saeed AlSary**
3. Olympus Coordinator, **Mr Peter Hawkins**
4. Local Faculty **Drs Magid S AbuBakr, Amir Hadi ALNahas and Khalid Osman**

The faculty worked in unison and complete harmony. The pre-workshop meetings were thorough and highly professional. The already developed program was discussed and every detail intensively probed. The already laid out details and objectives of the stations, order of the flow, and the role of the appointed faculty in each station were rehearsed.

There were also preoperative meetings to assess patient's suitability for live surgery.

The faculty were fully committed and efficiently executed the objectives of the workshops as planned.

The positivity of the faculty must be noted.

**Candidates**

- The number was 12. **Such a number is the correct one and should not be exceeded in the future.** The faculty managed to address the needs of each candidate efficiently and without compromise. The benefits were therefore maximized.

- The candidates came from different areas of Sudan and will, in the future, come from different African countries.

- The candidates were almost homogeneous in medical knowledge, surgical skills and aptitude. The benefits were therefore equally shared. This confirms that screening of candidates was efficient and without bias.
Basic Objectives of the Workshop
The workshop was designed to be a Basic Dry Lab for Minimal Invasive Surgery. The objectives were for the candidates to attain knowledge and skills in:

- knowledge of Hardware and software.
- Hand Eye Coordination
- Pelvic Anatomy
- Basics of Suturing
- The uses, safety and pitfalls of Electro surgery
- Complications and pitfalls of Minimal Invasive Surgery

These were addressed adequately and in detail in the allotted stations and lectures (which were delivered by International Faculty).

The candidates were fully instructed by faculty on the first day and for basic Hysteroscopy on the afternoon of the second day. They were then given Free Hand sessions, under direct supervision by faculty on the next day.

Those basic objectives were met.

Live Surgery
- Six Live surgeries were performed by International Faculty:
  - Laparoscopic Subtotal Hysterectomy
  - Laparoscopic Ovarian Cystectomy
  - Diagnostic Laparoscopy for Pelvic Pain
  - Operative Hysteroscopic Resection Of Intra-Uterine Adhesions (Asherman's Syndrome)
  - Laparoscopic Assessment of suspected Ovarian Cyst
Management of True Stress Incontinence with TVT-O

- Some (4 t 5) of the candidates assisted actively in the operative procedures
- The live surgeries were performed with the objectives of demonstrating basics of Minimal Invasive Surgery. Those objectives were met.
- Two of the live surgeries were successfully telecasted and the rest were well attended
- The main ORs (Pediatric Division ORs) were of good standard and satisfied the objectives of Minimal Invasive Surgery. However, a dedicated Gynecology OR for Minimally Invasive Surgery is truly needed.
- Anesthesia and Anesthetists' performance were adequate and highly acceptable.
- The Nursing OR staff were inadequately prepared and lacked knowledge of Minimal Invasive Surgery software. Peter had to work exceptionally hard to make sure that the equipments are handled properly. His contribution to that day should make him and Olympus proud.

Atlas Company:
Mr. Ali AbuShamma and his staff (Mr. Doleeb and others) executed their expected roles admirably. They were professional, caring and pleasant. They were present throughout the workshop and during live surgery.

Travel and Accommodation:
Travel arrangements were adequate except for the return journey of Dr. Saeed AlSary who had to be in economy Class instead of Business Class.

Accommodation was excellent in Rottana Hotel which had all the required and expected facilities of a 5 star hotel.

Olympus:
Mr. Peter Hawkins represented Olympus in its best. His highly professional attributes, dedication, knowledge, excellent communication skills, pleasantness and down to earth attitude made it easy for myself and Dr. Saeed to create a successful working team. We seemed to understand what was required and sort out acute problems without fuss or tensions, a true recipe for success.
Soba University Hospital:
Dr Soliman Mahmoud Director of SUH, and Professor M Ahmed Al Sheikh (in addition to being Director of the course) were key elements in the success of the workshop through facilitating and overcoming problems whenever any arose. They made me and Dr Saeed feel at home and part of the establishment.

Obstetrics and Gynecology Society of Sudan (OGSS):
Professor Abdel Latif Ashmaiq, President of the Society, reflected the role of the Sudanese Society admirably. His speeches in the official opening ceremony and the informal closing ceremony in his farm were well received. His commitment and dedication to medical education and progress are unequivocal.

Entertainment
The Course dinner was held in Tangerrine Restaurant. I congratulate Mr Ali Abu Shamma on his choice.

The closing ceremony was held in Professor Ashmaig’s Farm by the Blue Nile following a relaxed late lunch.

Conclusion
The Workshop and Course passed the stringent test set by FIGO. It has set the optimum standards for any future courses and workshops to be held under the auspices of FIGO and in partnership with Olympus.

Soba University Hospital was a suitable and ready venue for basic workshops and courses. More importantly it has the scope to rise to the challenges such basic courses and more complex ones can bring. I am told that an extension is soon to be done and will include an animal lab. I am more than happy to contribute to its development.

The number of candidates and duration of the course were wisely agreed upon. More candidates and/or workshop days would have been counterproductive in terms of teaching and physical running of the activity. Future activities have to be gauged accordingly.

The faculty worked in unison.

The candidates were a homogeneous group after stringent screening.

The matter of Nursing surgical staff has to be addressed and steps taken to verify and correct deficiencies that have already been identified.

I congratulate FIGO and Olympus on a successful educational activity, thank them for asking me.
and welcoming Dr Saeed AlSary to contribute to this very important event. We look forward to future ones with positive anticipation and enthusiasm.

The Future

- Regular workshops and courses in Minimal Invasive Surgery are to be planned and implemented
- Development of Animal lab Workshops
- Planning for Basic Workshops for OR nurses for both Gynecology and Surgery to run simultaneously with future workshops
- Further development of dedicated Postgraduate staff who will be able to develop Databases, posters, flyers and open communication channels in Sudan and worldwide.
- Certificates of Attendance and Appreciation with allotted CME’s must be issued to all contributing faculty and organizing committees
- The future holds a lot of promise. FIGO has the tools and now strong allies to see that promise realised