

Dear Bamboo School friends,

another long, productive week has passed by and yet it feels as if time is flying by!

Here are some insights on the previous week, told personally by 3 of our volunteers. Let's start with Pat and Mohsin at the hospital in Nong Khiaw.

This was Mohsin's experience over the week:

"This week at Nong Khiaw district hospital was a long week culminating with my first trip to Muang Ngoi regional health center. The week began, as most other weeks, at the District Hospital in Nong Khiaw seeing patients. With a markedly smaller staff due to the recent deployment and other meetings going on during the week, more autonomy was asked of me; however, I did ensure I taught the staff about cases that were worth teaching/learning. The week started with a serious trauma Monday night during my language session (I am a firm believer that hospitals see the most interesting things when no one is usually there).

Luckily there were two extra members because of my language lessons at the hospital to treat the patient. The patient came in following a motorbike vs water buffalox2 accident. He never lost consciousness throughout the incident. He arrived with severe chest pain not reproducible by palpation. He was tachycardic, tachypnic, cold, and with a blood pressure of 130/60 on arrival. Only superficial wounds were seen on the hands and legs but no signs of active bleeding. An IV was started promptly with 1L NS and an NSAID was given for pain control and blankets for warming. An ultrasound of the abdomen was done to ensure no abdominal bleed was present. After these tests came back negative, we decided to transfer the patient to Nam Bak District Hospital to have an x-ray done. I was initially concerned about an aortic rupture as seen in these kinds of injuries, which there was no capabilities to fix anywhere nearby. However, after seeing the patient have roughly stable vital signs for the hour and a half he was at the hospital, I was a bit more reassured that he would be okay. Sure enough, he came back in the morning to recover at Ngoi District Hospital and did just fine. I did not see the xrays from Nam Bak, but I believe it was also inconclusive, pointing towards a rib contusion.

After this was finished, we continued our language session, working this week on pronunciation of a presentation that one of the doctors must give in Thailand.

Otherwise, this week had some interesting cases. We had a possible extrapulmonary TB vs paragonimiasis, symptomatic afib, 2-3 potential rickettsial infections, possible mitral regurgitation, a critical iron deficiency anemia, and an incomplete abortion requiring a D&C.

The highlight of the week for me was going to the Health Center in Muang Ngoi and assisting with the diagnosis and treatment of patients from the villages. The language barrier was markedly pronounced as the villagers seemed to use words less familiar to me, but I was able to make out enough and utilized our interpreter Sytha to help ask some questions. Because of how busy it was, I was asked to write the prescriptions myself while the other provider was delivering medicine. The conditions were not of high acuity (mostly hypertension and acid reflux), but the window to get

people in and out was very short as many of these people had to return to their villages. Additionally, as this health center is a big part of the Bamboo Foundation, I donated my suturing equipment (pickup, needle driver, scissors, suture+needles, sterile gloves, saline flushes) and a tourniquette as I noticed the nurse there did not have one when she was starting an IV."

We are more than thankful to have such a caring doctor on the team, who not only takes an enormous amount of his personal time to teach the Lao staff some English, but also contributed to donating parts of his personal medical equipment! Thanks a million, Mohsin!

Furthermore, we have Pat who just joined the hospital about a month ago and has been able to also contribute to the maximum with her 43 years of nursing experience. Whilst Mohsin is based in the main part of the hospital, Pat has been working at the 'mother and child' unit:

" This week, I observed a tooth extraction. The dentist provider and I verbally reviewed the post procedure instructions given to the patient together.

Apart from that we received sick twins, with vomiting and fever and got admitted. The doctor and I talked about what medicines to give for the vomiting and what the children's fluid needs would be.

Many children with cough and fever came in for treatment. The providers and I talked about appropriate meds to give and I performed physical assessment on the little ones.

I took the blood pressure on a woman who complained of being dizzy/lightheaded and found it to be very low. After that I checked it lying, sitting and standing to see if maybe she was having a more acute problem with blood loss from somewhere. It turns out when we questioned her, she had a miscarriage at home about two weeks before she came to hospital. She had to be admitted and have a D&C, the miscarriage wasn't complete and they had to clean out the uterus. It is interesting how just thoroughly checking the vital signs led to finding out what was behind the complaint and she was able to get help..."





As per our team in Ban Khon Khuen, Franki narrates about their hardworking week at the construction site:

"This week in Ban Khone Kheung we have been working hard laying the concrete floors for the teachers room and classrooms 1 and 2. This involves shovelling a lot of sand, cement and rock into the mixer. This process has been hindered repeatedly as on one day the mixer broke down, and also for a couple of days there was no water in the village which is needed to mix with the cement. On the days where there was no water, the construction workers started on the ceiling in the teachers room. This is now currently paused as luckily the water came back today so we were able to carry on with the floor in classroom 2 and started with the floor in the corridor".



I will be visiting the construction site on Tuesday and look forward to personally tell you about it's progress in the next Sunday Newsletter.

As per me, Isabel, I have had meetings with the hospital director in Nong Khiaw about donating hand sanitizer dispensers, therefore contacted a local Lao provider, did the end of the month accounting and started to coordinate this upcoming month, which will be a very busy one for all of us.

We all wish you all a superb start into the new week and hope that it will be exciting and productive as ours will be!

Regards,

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Isabel Montano