

26.03.2017

Dear Bamboo School friends,

Another week has flown by once again and we have some exciting updating news.

First of all, we were happy to welcome Shay, our construction volunteer from Malaysia, back in Nong Khiaw on Wednesday. Shay was brave and kind enough to stay alone for 1 week at the construction site when all the other volunteers had left (Franki for a vacation, Klaus and Silke to get their visas extended). Well, to her benefit she has been learning the Lao language in no time and speaks it almost fluently (respect!).

As per our medical volunteer, Mohsin from the United States, here is an insight into his busy week at the hospital in Nong Khiaw:

“This week was the last week for 5 of the practitioners before they were deployed to the regional health districts indefinitely. In preparation for that and as a part of the town’s woman’s day initiatives, most of the female staff had meetings and trainings during the morning and some afternoons from Monday to Thursday.

On Friday, the hospital had a celebration for these staff members before they moved out into the small village health centers. The hospital was running on a smaller staff during this time. With a better understanding of the medicine that is being practiced here, I have spent most of my time this week handling more complex, acute care situations.

On Monday, during our daily English- Lao language lesson, a young woman came to the hospital with severe right upper quadrant abdominal pain, suspicious of cholecystitis vs. cholelithiasis. I asked the doctor on call if he wanted to admit the patient, but she was comfortable with sending her home with antibiotics, analgesia, and gave the woman the instructions to come back in a few hours if the pain worsened. Otherwise it was recommended to her to return in the morning to receive an ultrasound in order to get a clearer picture.

The patient came back the next day and had the ultrasound done; luckily the gallbladder appeared normal. However, the patient returned again the following day in severe pain shooting straight into her back in combination with nausea and vomiting. My suggestion was to prescribe tramadol, which was accepted and therefore the patient was asked to return home, since she was in less pain.

During my time here, I have learned that it is next to impossible to practice medicine or teach in this hospital without having some grasp of the language, so I am very thankful that some of the doctors are taking time out of their day to teach me Lao while I help them with English. Also, having Sytha (our translator) for a few of the days has been extremely helpful.”

Pat, our nursing volunteer from The United States, Sytha (our Lao translator) and myself went to Muang Ngoi village on Wednesday in order to attend the ‘market morning’ on Thursday, that takes

place every ten days over there. It is considered to be a special day in Muang Ngoi, since many people from the villages close by come to sell their goods and combine it with a visit to the clinic (that was built by Bamboo School). Therefore, we wanted to support the nurses at the clinic with Pat's knowledge and expertise. She was able to consult patients, assist with vaccination shots and supervise treatments. It was a very successful morning and a routine that will be implemented for the upcoming market days.

Klaus and Silke, our German construction volunteers, returned from Luang Prabang on Thursday. Since it was Klaus's birthday during that time, we celebrated this special occasion as they returned to Nong Khiaw.

On Friday team Ban Khon Khuen returned to the construction site. Sadly, this will be the last 2 weeks for Silke and Klaus, before they continue their bicycle journey to Vietnam. We don't even want to think of their departure and have seriously considered kidnapping their bicycles instead. Even though we will thank them at the end of their time with us, I can speak for the entire Bamboo School team, that it has been an utmost pleasure and honor to have met this lovely couple, who we will never forget.

Wishing everyone a happy start into the new week!

Isabel Montano, General Manager





