

REPORT OF VISIT TO TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITAL, NEPAL
by Jennifer Rush

My visits to Nepal have been part of the program initiated by Professor Chris Curry in 2008 in which a Nepali program to train doctors in specialist Emergency Medicine (EM) was established by the Institute of Medicine, at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH) in Kathmandu. This is a three year program, culminating in the awarding of a Doctorate of Medicine in Emergency Medicine (DMEM). The program has been supported by ISTIH and has involved the visits of 18 members of the Australian and New Zealand College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM).

This was my third visit to Nepal over the past year, and my second where I have spent time at TUTH Emergency Department. My second visit was to Dharan, for the NEMSem14 (Nepal Emergency Medicine Seminar 2014) event in April of this year.

Return visits have enabled me to have a more in-depth knowledge of the Nepali medical system, the Emergency Medicine training program, the personalities involved, and in particular the progress of the three trainees in the DMEM.

Two of the three residents (Ramesh Maharjan and Ajay Thapa) were approaching their final exams, at the end of the three year program. I spent much of my time during this visit teaching them directly in face-to-face tutorials, which were held on a daily basis for roughly 3-4 hours. This was complemented by a teaching ward round each morning.

Ramesh and Ajay were totally committed to the teaching sessions and went to considerable effort to attend all of them. This was despite Ajay working outside the ED (initially in anaesthesia and then cardiac ED). Both the anaesthetic department and the cardiac ED appeared to accept requests to come to teaching without any issues.

The teaching sessions consisted of a mix of written work and viva examination practice, using ACEM exam questions, modified to suit the Nepali system. The written sessions were topic based, with input from the residents on the subject areas in which they wanted most attention. They were especially keen to obtain teaching on administration and resuscitation, trauma, fluid management, massive transfusion - the high acuity areas of the curriculum - as well as ECGs. They were given the topics and questions each day, and then they did reading and prepared answers for the teaching session the following day. They arrived the following day with preparation done.

The teaching on administration was used to highlight areas that need change in Nepal, in the anticipation that once the residents are qualified specialists, they will understand how to effect positive change in the emergency medical system. This included a variety of issues such as referral systems, access block and quality assurance in clinical practice.

It was obvious that the three DMEM residents had medically matured in their practice over the past year, in that they were both more clinically competent, but also more aware of the non-clinical issues surrounding emergency medicine practice and what is needed in a resource-limited country to improve patient care.

In September, another resident was accepted by TUTH for training in the DMEM. Although expansion of the program is slow, the acceptance of a fourth resident is a step forward, and hopefully will herald greater growth in years to come.

The DMEM exams for the two more senior residents were held between 21st September and 10th October. It was with great joy that we have been informed that both Ramesh and Ajay passed these exams. Hence Nepal now has it's first two specialist Emergency Physicians. This ushers in a new era for Nepal, where positive and sustained change in EM can be effected by the Nepalese themselves, for the benefit of the broader population of this developing country.

The faculty in the Department of General Practice and Emergency Medicine at TUTH were all united in their appreciation of the support given by ACEM members over the past several years.