

Position: MCAI Fellowship in Advanced Obstetric Training for the Gambia

Number of Vacancies: 2

Start Date and Duration: Between August and October 2015 for 10 to 12 months (annual leave and R+R included within the contract period)

Minimum Requirements for post:

- 5 years post-graduate O+G experience (i.e ST6 level or above)
- ALSO/MOET provider
- Membership of the Royal college of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (occasional exceptions may be made to this requirement)

Desirable:

- An interest and experience in medical education especially in resource limited settings
- ALSO/MOET or equivalent instructor experience

Remuneration:

- All flights, travel, accommodation, insurance will be paid by MCAI
- An in-country per diem of £10/day to cover out of pocket costs

Project Overview:

Maternal and Child health Advocacy International (MCAI) is a UK registered charity working in many low resource settings to improve care provided to pregnant women, their babies and children. We support local health systems at many levels from buildings and equipment to specialist advocacy at a national level. We are committed to training and have a well established international programme of short courses in Emergency Life Saving Skills accredited by ALSG. The work of MCAI is outlined in detail on the website: www.mcai.org.uk

To meet the need for in country postgraduate training, we have developed a competency based Diploma in Advanced Obstetrics. Both doctors and senior midwives receive apprentice style training to a defined curriculum. The programme has been successfully piloted in Liberia where the senior midwife trainees have continued to provide access to comprehensive emergency obstetric care including caesarean section throughout the Ebola epidemic.

MCAI has been working in the Gambia for over 8 years, and has been instrumental in increasing the number of women delivering in hospitals and health centres.

In 2014, we were asked by the Gambian Ministry of Health to pilot our diploma with local junior doctors and senior midwives. The new qualification will be recognised by the government and will be incorporated into any future postgraduate O&G training scheme. The current candidates are in post and are likely to complete the programme by October 2015, when a new group will be deployed by the government.

About the Gambia and Brikama Major Health Centre

The Gambia is a very small country on the West African coast with a population of 1,500,000. The maternal mortality rate is approximately 400/100,000 live births. As of 2009, there were 62 doctors in the entire country including many foreign medical personnel (largely Cuban) who provide essential support to its health service. The number of doctors deployed in each health facility is extremely small and there is a desperate need to increase the capacity to provide comprehensive emergency obstetric care nationwide.

The Gambian medical school has been graduating doctors since 2007. However, post graduate training is minimal, forcing many junior doctors to look overseas. There is currently an increased government commitment to staff rural clinical facilities with Gambian doctors. To be effective rather than overwhelmed, they need post graduate training in the theoretical and practical skills needed to manage pregnancy, delivery and their complications.

Brikama major health centre is located in the centre of the town and is approximately 40 minutes' drive from the capital Banjul. Around 6000 women deliver there each year but until recently there was a skeleton obstetric staff and no reliable operating theatre. Complex and surgical cases were therefore stabilised and referred to Banjul hospital, with the inherent risk of transfer. Since we began our training programme, MCAI trainers have joined the obstetric team and achieved a number of structural and organisational improvements. The operating theatre is open, and the majority of obstetric procedures are now performed in-house. We have also successfully advocated for an increase in midwifery and nursing staff. Although still sub-optimal the situation in the unit is much improved.

The MCAI Fellowship in more detail:

The 2 Fellows will work alongside the one resident Cuban Gynaecologist to provide a 1 in 3 senior doctor cover for emergency obstetric care. They will be supported on shift by 3 trainees, junior doctors or senior midwives, and hopefully the 2 successful diplomates from this year's training program.

The roles and responsibilities will be as follows:

- The apprentice-style training of 3 junior doctors/senior midwives who are on placement at the hospital to the MCAI curriculum.
- To complement the apprenticeship training with formal teaching sessions on anatomy, physiology and any aspect of the syllabus not routinely covered in clinical practice
- To engage in midwifery teaching and to involve the trainees in this task
- To facilitate structural and organisational improvements in the running of the department and to involve the trainees in this process

- To develop and support departmental teaching activities such as reflective case review, skills drills, and maternal mortality audits and to involve the trainees in this process
- To teach the trainees obstetric surgical procedures including complex C/S, ventouse delivery, eclampsia and PPH management

Educational and Clinical Support

It is recognised that the Gambian working environment can be difficult and unfamiliar, and that fellows may find this, and the higher level of clinical responsibility, challenging although within the competency of an ST6 trainee

For these reasons, the two fellows will be supported, for at least one month initially by a UK consultant obstetrician with experience of the facility and the working environment. Advice will always be available and further supportive visits will be made intermittently through the year as needed, and to cover annual leave. MCAI also provides constant logistic support, which includes the provision of emergency equipment, medical and surgical supplies and essential drugs which frequently become needed to keep the maternity unit working appropriately.

This is an exciting opportunity to gain experience of obstetrics in a low resource setting whilst making a significant contribution to the local infrastructure as part of a sustainable training programme.

For more information and to apply for this position please contact Prof David Southall as follows:

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