

Amos Update: November 2009

December has begun, Christmas music is playing and the advent calendar started much to Max's delight. Cards and presents are arriving which is fun and the students who've just got here will be with us till after the event. Planning on duck again – I just hope there's some power to cook it with this year !

We continued to be busy for most of November although it has thankfully calmed down a little now. We've had some appalling pathology secondary to pre-eclampsia with two women sadly dying following abruptions and a third lady whose kidneys packed up. I was starting to try to get her dialysis in Dar when, finally, after over 72 hours, they started to do just a little and she slowly crawled back from the edge. We also had two ruptured uteruses and the normal lots of PPH and eclamptics so its been busy. December so far (day 2) is quieter only my colleague who keeps the gynae going has gone on leave

We had a visitor from the States encouraging us to do more for the breast fed babies exposed to HIV. This has needed some careful thinking so as not to get it too complex but I guess inevitably the one regime fits all approach is getting harder to maintain. The first of our Early Infant Diagnosis results have finally got back to us which is great. The machine was donated the workers and training is paid for but no-one remembered money for the postage of the blood spots to Moshi and the results back which is why we had no results. So we're trying to find that money – its only £5 per week The forms can't be batched much as you can't do the test till 6 weeks old and ideally if positive you want to start the baby on treatment by 10 weeks old. World Aids Day this year was held at district level at a dispensary called Misozwe and Laisha and Hawa went and spoke well. District leaders were very interested in PMTCT and in the Mothers Club through which we try to reach out to the women, as HIV is seldom their main problem - food probably is top...

The government is starting a perinatal mortality campaign. Now that Malaria has reduced so much the 1-5 mortality has dropped so attention is being switched to the 0-1 deaths, many of which are perinatal. I had already begun to look at this with some students recently doing an audit but they didn't get round all the cases so I'm having to be more active. We've agreed to



World AIDS Day Meeting

have weekly or fortnightly meetings to see what is going on – been collecting cases for two days now (2 cases) and already some things not well done in labour ward are coming up so

Machines continue to be an issue in the lab – the -80 freezer is still out of action and is likely to be so until after Christmas. The Partec CD4 counter has been fixed and we can now do CD4 percentages for our children. This is just as well because the government has run out of reagents for our other CD4 counting machine. This effectively means that there are only a few places in



World AIDS Day Meeting

the country able to do this test at the moment. The reason I have been given is that the company that supplies the tests has not been paid – though I am sure that the story is more complicated than that.

I was able to send Robert Booy's pneumococci to him in Australia after many months of paperwork. I was very worried that something would go wrong en-route but in the event it was all very smooth and quick. He will be able to use a fancy assay that they developed in Sydney to see whether the pneumococci in HIV positive children's noses are the same types as those the vaccine is active against.



Rudolph (Max)

We had a lovely weekend up to the cool of Moshi – camping on the slopes of Kilimanjaro in a place where the food was Ok if a bit pricey for us but all was forgiven when the cheese board came out We went for a family event of one of my colleagues – they get together (all 10 children) once a year for the mothers birthday. There were lots of Islamic prayers and wafting incense and then goat to eat. We also managed to go to an English church service with a Sunday school which was a treat. Piran enjoyed going up for communion with me and getting blessed so much that he then went up with Zack and a third time with Max

One Thursday, I threw aside my Protestant Anglo-Saxon work ethic and went to a friend's Hindu wedding which was interesting and very colourful – with a delicious curry to follow. The school's AGM thankfully came and went without too much acrimony – I've just got to complete the auditors questions, but the viability of the school at current children levels remains a serious concern. Saturday morning sailing has recommenced which is lots of fun – last Saturday we had a picnic on the island in Tanga Bay and Max came back on a Dhow – helming at least some of the way ! We were also involved, via the new NZ teacher, with the Tanga Disabled Children's Olympics which was rather hot but lots of fun as the TIS kids helped lots of others, mostly with Down's syndrome but other disabilities too, to roll tyres, wheel wheelbarrows and jump in sacks. Power and water continue to be issues, especially the former although thankfully the long cuts at the end of October have decreased. Last night was the school's christmas concert and amongst a number of skits and songs, Max starred as Rudolph.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas
God bless
Love
Sally Ben Zack Max and Piran

Prayer and Praise

1. For decisions about drugs and breast feeding HIV exposed babies
2. For Early Infant Diagnosis of HIV and its funding
3. For more children for TIS
4. For the Joy of Christmas that we may all share together