REPORT

ESSENTIAL PAIN MANAGEMENT (EPM) WORKSHOPS

Gizo Hospital, Western Province
Solomon Islands

Tuesday 24th & Wednesday 25th June 2014

Executive Summary

The EPM course was developed by Drs. Wayne Morriss and Roger Goucke to address the problem of pain management in resource poor settings. It is a simple and effective means of teaching health workers to recognise, assess and treat pain, recommending inexpensive and easily accessible techniques of pain management. The course emphasizes early handover to local instructors and includes sessions on overcoming local barriers to pain management.

An EPM course was held in Gizo, training 15 candidates, 14 of whom went on to complete the EPM Instructors’ course the next day. The course was well received, with plans for further EPM teaching on an informal basis in wards and bedside, and more formal training for health workers from isolated clinics elsewhere in the Western Province.

Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands is an archipelagic nation – comprising over 1000 islands in 28,400km² of ocean - lying east of PNG and north west of Vanuatu. The population is a little over 560,000 and predominantly Melanesian. Pidgin is spoken throughout the islands, in addition to 70 local languages. English is also used in hospital settings, but only 1-2% of the population speaks English.

The Solomon Islands have been self-governing since 1976, but the last decades have been marked by civil unrest and natural disasters. In 2007, the islands were struck by a major earthquake and tsunami, which mainly affected Gizo, killing over 50 people in the town and destroying infrastructure.
National income per capita is PPP$2130 (2012) placing it in the lower middle income category of countries’ wealth. More than 75% of its population is involved in subsistence farming and fishing. Education is not compulsory, and only 60% of school age children have access to primary education. Lack of education is cited as a major barrier to pain management.

Life expectancy at birth is 68 years, with under 5 mortality 31/1000 live births (2012). Maternal mortality ratio is 150/100,000 live births. Government expenditure on health/capita is 6.9% of GDP.

Most of the population lives in small isolated communities along the coasts. 60% live in communities with fewer than 200 people. 10% of Solomon islanders live in urban areas, with 30,000 people living in the capital, Honiara (CIA world fact book, WHO statistics).

Background

EPM courses were held in Honiara in November 2010 and October 2011. At that time, there was plans to hold more courses in the provinces, particularly Malaita. However because of ongoing land disputes over the airstrip in Malaita, flights in or out of the island are still not operating. Instead, and in consultation with Dr Kaeni Agiomea, it was proposed to hold a course in Gizo, the capital of the Western Province. (Dr Kaeni is the Head of Anaesthesia at Honiara’s National Referral Hospital).

Gizo itself has a population of about 5,000, but the hospital services about 80,000 people from the surrounding province. There is a smaller hospital in Munda, with about 40 beds and two permanent medical staff. The Western Province is otherwise serviced by small health clinics.

The new and upgraded Gizo hospital was opened in 2012. It was built with funding from the Japanese government and has facilities to cater for future expansion. At present there are no anaesthetic services, with operations (mainly Caesars) done under spinal and minor procedures done under local anaesthesia or ketamine. The hospital has capacity for 70 beds, and is staffed by 5 resident doctors.

There is no nursing school in Gizo, though there is a full time nurse educator (Christine Qalokesa) and a volunteer nurse educator from Australia (Megan Vandeleer).

Local coordinators

1. Dr Greg Jilini is the Provincial Health Director at Gizo. I was unfortunately unable to meet him as was in Honiara during the course. Dr Jilini was very helpful in helping arrange the course and freeing up staff from regular duties to attend.
2. Sr. Megan Vandepeer is an Australian Registered Nurse working as a volunteer in Gizo for 12 months. Megan was of great assistance as a local organiser.

3. Sr. Christine Qalokesa is the nurse educator for Gizo hospital and hopefully will be involved in ongoing nursing education regarding EPM.

**First EPM Workshop – Tuesday, 24th June**

**Instructors**

1. Dr Liz Bashford, Anaesthetist  
lizbashford@mac.com

2. Dr Nicola Swain  
Senior Lecture, Department of Psychological Medicine  
University of Otago, NZ  
nicola.swain@otago.ac.nz

15 Course Participants - see Appendix 1  
(9 nurses, 3 doctors, pharmacist, physiotherapist and a dentist)

Feedback forms – see Appendix 2  
Pre and Post test results – see Appendix 3

Pre-test mean - 16/25 – 64%  
Post-test mean – 19/25 – 77%

**Instructors course, Tuesday 27th November**

**Instructors**

1. Dr Liz Bashford

2. Dr Nicola Swain

14 Course Participants – see Appendix 1  
Feedback forms – see Appendix 2

**Discussion of barriers to effective pain management**

Barriers were cited as lack of education amongst both patients and health care workers, lack of protocols, unavailability of drugs in more remote health care clinics. Fear of addiction was listed as an important barrier.

Pethidine is currently prescribed in preference to morphine. This was discussed, and a change of prescribing practices recommended. Slow release oral morphine is not available. Patients needing palliative care are sent home with morphine suspension.
Venue and catering

The new hospital has an education centre with a large well lit and air-conditioned room, which was ideal. Catering was provided by outside caterers and meals were ample and of good quality for A$15/head/day (lunch and morning and afternoon teas).

Bulk printing of the manuals was not able to be done in Gizo. Honiara can print and bind documents, but because of logistics, we had manuals printed in Australia and took them with us to Gizo.

Liaison

Dr Kaeni Agiomea is the Director of Anaesthesia in Honiara, and instrumental in guiding the EPM program in the Solomons. Dr Greg Jilini would be the local contact person for future visits to Gizo.

Success and relevance of the visit

This is the first EPM to be held at Gizo. Though the numbers for the course were relatively small, the fact that nearly all of the candidates from the EPM have now also completed the instructors course will hopefully increase the impact of the course on the local staff. Discussion was held regarding the presentation of the EPM in a weekly medical meeting, and making the EPM a continuing part of ongoing Nurse education.

Many of the health needs of the Western Province's population are serviced by small isolated health clinics. The health care workers staffing the clinics visit Gizo regularly, and EPM will potentially become part of their ongoing nursing education for the health clinic workers. All the EPM resources have been made available to the nursing and medical staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Development of protocols for treatment of common pain problems within the hospital. I will follow up with Megan and Christine.

2. Possibility of further EPM training within the nursing education system, for both nurses working at the Gizo hospital, and those working in more remote clinics.

3. As in Honiara, there is no prescribing of slow release oral morphine, as it is not stocked in pharmacy. Need a local driver to recognise its effectiveness in palliative care. Will follow up with Megan.
Logistics

There are direct flights to Honiara from Brisbane, but none of the other Australian capitals. The flight takes three hours and is usually in the afternoon, arriving at a convenient time. Internal flights are expensive, with flights Honiara to Gizo return costing A$450 to A$600. There is a 15 kg luggage limit on the light aircraft, though hand luggage is not always weighed. Boat travel is apparently uncomfortable and crowded and best avoided.

We stayed at the Gizo Hotel, where the PIP has an account, which was clean and comfortable, although the food was of average quality. The Waterfront Café provided better food in a good setting. The hospital is about 500 metres from the hotel.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr Greg Jilini for allowing his staff the time to attend this course. Megan Vandeleer was a great help in organising the room and catering and attending to extra printing needs.

Also the Pacific Islands Project with the Royal Australian College of Surgeons for funding, and Lito de Silva for his assistance with accommodation.

Liz Bashford
Nicola Swain
July 2014

lizbashford@mac.com
0417 754751
## Appendix 1

### Participants Tuesday 24\textsuperscript{th} June, 2014

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Priscillar ROBERT</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>RN, gynaecology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Jahrad LILIGETO</td>
<td>(m)</td>
<td>Doctor, paediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Patricia BOSO BUKA</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>RN, operating theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jennifer SIGOTO</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>Doctor, A&amp;E</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jennifer ANIKOLO</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>RN, paediatrics</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Steve BUKA</td>
<td>(m)</td>
<td>RN, eye department, OPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Henao BOARA</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>RN, OPD</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Regina LEBEO</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>Physiotherapist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Viera DICK</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>Pharmacist</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Joan TAGOLO</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>Midwife</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Anika TAKI</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>Clinic nurse</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>(f)</td>
<td>Nurse educator</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Andrew SOMA</td>
<td>(m)</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Freda MAEALATHA</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>Dentist</td>
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### Participants for Instructors’ course on Wednesday, 25\textsuperscript{th} June

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<td>Dentist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Melissa PRESLEY</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>RN, Matron’s office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Jennifer ANIKOLO</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>RN, paediatrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Samson PANDA</td>
<td>(m)</td>
<td>RN, OPD</td>
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Appendix 2: Analysis of participant feedback forms

24th June - EPM - 15 forms received – all positive feedback (mainly 5s)

Three most important things you learned?

- Identifying pain types – understanding difference neuropathic/nociceptive
- Using more than one drug at a time
- RAT

Will EPM change how you work?

- Will use RAT
- Not afraid of using combinations of drugs
- Understanding patients respond differently to pain

How can EPM be improved. Comments?

- Should do a ward round as part of workshop to see real patients
- Involve more health care providers
- All doctors should attend
- One day workshop is not enough – extend to two days
- More workshops
- Should have displays of drugs for the workshops
- Enjoyed this workshop, especially the food

25th June INSTRUCTOR WORKSHOP - 14 forms received – all positive feedback

Three most important things you learned?

- Presenting lecture topics/courage to stand in front of audience
- How to make a lecture effective
- Structure/relevance/interactivity

Will you be able to use EPM instructor training where you work?

- Giving feedback on EPM to my department
- Presentation to colleagues in maternity ward
- Instructor manual will be my guideline

What could be improved/changed?

- More EPM workshops to practice
- Teach computer skills to use Powerpoint
- Involve every hospital staff member in this
- More practice giving lectures
Appendix 3:

Test results

Pre & post test results 24.06.14

Pre & post test results 24.06.14