

Rural health update June 2010

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In the news

Rural recognition

Drs Ben and Taryn Gaunt and Karl le Roux from Zithulele Hospital were included in Mail&Guardian '200 Young South Africans you have to take to lunch'. Copied below as 'fair use'. See the full stories at <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2010-06-10-200-young-south-africans-health>

Dr Charles Benjamin Gaunt and Dr Taryn Gaunt
Chief medical officer and Principal medical officer, Zithulele Hospital



'Their story reads like an extract from the *Poisonwood Bible* – a young mission-driven family moves to rural Africa and faces issues of life, death, poverty and disease.

The difference is that 34-year-old Charles and Taryn Gaunt not only chose to move to the isolated Eastern Cape to change the face of rural healthcare but are also deeply committed to seeing their vision become a reality. It takes a special kind of couple with an enormous amount of faith to take on Zithulele Hospital – a 147-bed hospital providing primary health care to 130 000 people. But take it on they did.

After five years under their care, along with their colleague, Dr Karl le Roux, they have succeeded in halving perinatal mortalities and deliveries are up 62%.

More than 1 500 patients are now on ARVs, thanks to the treatment programme they launched. The paediatric ward boasts eight times as many admissions as it did, a sign that the community trusts them with the care of their children.

Starting with a team of three doctors, now increased to nine, these two UCT graduates have helped Zithulele Hospital become a source of pride in the Oliver Tambo district, where more than 70% are unemployed and HIV/Aids is rampant.

But this is only the start of their vision, which extends beyond the hospital to include "a multidisciplinary set-up with emphasis on education for locals" .

Leading this vision is the Jabulani Rural Health Foundation they co-founded – a non-profit organisation that supports the hospital and surrounding community through various community-based health, education and agricultural programmes.

It's hard to believe that with all this on their plate Taryn still manages to home-school two of their three children, and Ben received a distinction for his MSc in primary healthcare from the University of London.' –Cat Pritchard 🏠

Invitation to shadow a rural doctor for a day

(read the press releases online at www.rudasa.org.za/papers.php)

To fully appreciate the support rural health care needs in order to meet national goals, the Rural Health Advocacy Project together with RuDASA invited the President, the Minister and Deputy Minister of Finance, the Minister and Deputy Minister of Health, as well as the other Finance MinMec and Members of the National Health Council to shadow a rural doctor for a full day. Update 10 June 2010: We are pleased to announce that the HoD for KZN Health and MEC Finance for Western Cape have taken up the call. Unfortunately, national and other provinces have shown little interest in this initiative to experience rural health from the ground.- Marije Versteeg, Project Manager, Rural Health Advocacy Project (RHAP) 🏠



The Rural Health Advocacy Project (RHAP) advocates for improved access to high quality, comprehensive health care services in rural areas with the aim of improving the nation's health. The RHAP is a partnership between Wits Centre for Rural Health, RuDASA and SECTION27 [incorporating the Aids Law Project].

The project has three focus areas:

Voice: This priority addresses the need to make rural health more visible to key stakeholders, such as the government, the media and the general public, by highlighting challenges and good practices.

Policy: This entails the rural-proofing of existing and new policies and guidelines.

Implementation: This priority area focuses on actual implementation on the ground in relation to HR and Health Systems. The RHAP will monitor and gather evidence on these issues and give them to the relevant stakeholders to act upon.

Current RHAP activities include:

- Recent press releases on CSMO allocation to rural areas, rural health financing, OSD and related media coverage
- Monitoring of rural health care delivery on the ground and reporting to relevant stakeholders to act upon, eg drug shortages in EC and a hospital in trouble in Mpumalanga
- Rural proofing workshop planned at the next conference, co-facilitated by RHAP and RuDASA. Rural proofing means that policies need to be developed and reviewed through a rural lens to ensure they are implementable and beneficial to rural areas
- RHAP engaging with DoH around a number of HRH challenges, following a letter to the Minister co-signed by Wits Centre for Rural Health, RuDASA, Wits Centre for Health Policy, Africa Health Placements, and SECTION27
- Coordinating a rural health care study with a panel of rural health care experts, progress of which will be presented at the rural health conference, and ultimately leading to a position paper on rural health
- RHAP joined the Budget Expenditure Monitoring Forum (BEMF), and is looking at equitable and effective funding for rural health care

For more information please visit www.rhap.org.za or email Marije on marije@rhap.org.za 🏠

Conferences

14th Annual Rural Health Conference

Get ready to be inspired!
Inspiration beyond borders
Swaziland 2010



14th Annual Conference on Rural Health
26-28 August 2010

The Royal Villas, Ezulwini Valley, Swaziland

www.rudasa.org.za

www.msf.org.za/rudasa


The 14th Annual Rural Health Conference will be held in Swaziland from 26-28 August 2010.

Themed 'Inspiration without borders', and with a focus on HIV/AIDS, task shifting and health care management, the programme includes skills training, scientific presentations, and tracks on medical education, advocacy and rehabilitation, as well as a social programme for the whole family.

This unique annual conference is an opportunity to gain new knowledge and perspectives, and network with other rural practitioners from across Southern Africa. Here is the place where your imagination will be inspired, without borders!

We invite any rural health worker (doctors, nurses and other professionals) to join us for an unforgettable experience!

"Asibonane kaNgwane!" "See you in Swaziland!"

For more information please visit our website www.rudasa.org.za 

6TH PHASA 2010 CONFERENCE

29 NOVEMBER TO 1 DECEMBER 2010 EAST LONDON, SOUTH AFRICA

"HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS, HEALTHY PEOPLE
AND PUBLIC HEALTH ADVOCACY"



29 November to 1 December 2010; Premier Hotel East London and East London ICC
Abstract submission deadline: 26 July. Early registration deadline: 20 August 2010

Organizers contact details: | Ms Meagan Simpson | Tel: +27 21 938 0554 | Email: Meagan.simpson@mrc.ac.za

Conference website: www.phasa2010.org.za

Awards

Rural Doctor of the Year Award

In 2002 the Rural Doctors Association of Southern Africa (RuDASA) inaugurated an annual award for the rural doctor of the year. The award is given to a rural doctor, working at the coal face, who is judged by the RuDASA Committee to have made a significant contribution towards rural health in the previous year.

The award was named after Dr Pierre Jaques, a founder member of RuDASA and a doyen of rural practice in South Africa. He spent most of his working life at Elim Hospital in rural Limpopo province and has been a tireless advocate for rural health and the role of the rural doctor in South Africa.

The RuDASA Committee is now calling for nominations for the Pierre Jaques Award for 2010. Since the conference is being held in Swaziland, we especially want to encourage nominations from Swaziland, as well as other Southern African countries. Any interested person may nominate a rural doctor working in Southern Africa for consideration of the 2010 Rural Doctor of the Year. Nominations should be submitted to Dr Jenny Nash (082 5327 537) at stevejennash0@gmail.com.

To see previous winners of the award and download the nomination form, go to <http://www.rudasa.org.za/award.php>. Closing date for nominations is 18 July 2010. 🏠

New resources

www.ruralrehab.co.za



'Prior to the arrival of the internet, living in a rural setting really meant that you had to forge ahead alone, or if you were lucky with a friend on the end of a phone to advise you. But in this time in South Africa, there is cellphone cover and as a result, internet cover, in almost every area of the country. This means that the internet can be a supportive resource and reduce the professional isolation that used to be the lot of the rural rehab worker!'

If your passion lies in improving disability care in rural areas, take a look at this site, and why not subscribe to the HST disability discussion list, a useful email based discussion group that shares queries and keeps you updated on the latest news and resources available in the field of disability. Find it at <http://www.hst.org.za/generic/31>. 🏠

Hospital review

Tonga Hospital, Tonga, Mpumalanga

'Wonderful people, mild winters, and wildlife'..

Tonga Hospital is a dynamic 150 bed District Hospital in Rural Mpumalanga near Komatipoort. Situated in the Nkomazi district, and surrounded by the eco-tourism area 'The Wild Frontier', it offers an opportunity to gain a wide variety of clinical skills as well as the perfect location to explore the Highveld!



The hospital has 5 Community Service Posts, 5 Family Medicine Registrar Posts and welcomes overseas elective students. Tonga Hospital provides many opportunities for clinical skills training (inc. anaesthesia) under the supervision of our experienced Medical Officers, Family Physician and visiting specialists. Tonga Hospital has Casualty, OPD, OB/GYN, Paediatrics, Medicine, HIV Clinic, Theatre and Lab, Pharmacy and XRay dept.

Challenges are the high burden of disease (especially HIV/AIDS) and empty posts (although sessional doctors are available to fill the gaps). There are plans to open new wards in the near future, in particular a nursery with funding from an educational grant.

There is good teamwork between staff members and we meet daily to discuss new patients., We have a new tea room with 3G internet. Accommodation is provided on site, with 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units available, with air conditioning.

Tonga Hospital is perfectly placed for weekend get-aways to view the splendors of Rural Mpumalanga, Mozambique, Swaziland and Kruger National Park. We are 4 and half hours drive from Johannesburg, 6 hours from Durban via Swaziland and 1 hours drive from Nelspruit airport.

For more information please contact Dr Patrick Rogers on 0731923643 or Dr Mampho Mochaoa on 0825301598 or visit 'Tonga Hospital Enthusiasts' on Facebook. 🏠

Meet the committee

Dr Karl le Roux, RuDASA Chairperson 2008-10



Full name: Karl Willem le Roux

Place of birth:

Stockholm, Sweden, to a Swedish mother and a South African Father

Studies:

UCT '99 (MBChB)

CMSA – DA and DipObst

Uppsala University, Sweden, '06 (Masters in International Health)

Other achievements:

Married to Sally le Roux, with two kids: Emma (3) and Johan (1)

Travelled through Africa for 6 months in a Landrover

Chair of JuDASA 2001-2 and Vice-Chair 2002-3

Current place of work: Zithulele Hospital, Eastern Cape

Previous places of work: Victoria Hospital, Cape Town (Internship);
Cecilia Makiwane, East London (Community Service);
Alice, EC; Hogsback, EC; Tygerberg, WC; Bristol, UK

Reason for going into rural health:

Visited Southern Zimbabwe's Swedish mission hospitals as a student, and thought it was a pretty amazing way to practice medicine. The idea of being a general hospital doctor rather than a specialist also developed during medical school. Friends and I often sat and dreamed of starting a small rural hospital somewhere in Africa... Later, my wife and I told some of those friends (Ben and Taryn Gaunt) that we would be keen to join them if they found a hospital in the Eastern Cape, which is why we are where we are...

Most important lessons in rural health:


that in rural medicine having patience, and working slowly and steadily to improve things rather than in frenetic bursts is very important (and helps prevent burn-out) and that relationships are crucial! Less profoundly - growing vegetables is HARD!

Favourite local getaway:

Bulungula, followed closely by Mdumbi and Hole-in-the-Wall.

Little known fact:

I suffer one terrible delusion: I believe that rugby refs are able to hear me through the TV if I just shout loudly enough.

To view the list of committee members and provincial representatives please see <http://www.rudasa.org.za/about.php> 

Students corner

Wits Rural Health Club – Taung Rural School Visit



The Wits Rural Health Club is a student driven organisation at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. Our vision is to promote rural health amongst health science students and to organize events that will stimulate more interest in this sector of healthcare. Professor Ian Couper and Ms Ntsiki Sondzaba are also involved and we benefit a lot from their experience. The club was started in 2009 after the RuDASA conference in Broederstroom and we hope to see more students getting involved in rural health by promoting attendance of the 2010 Swaziland conference.

In the events we have organized this year we always aim to combine rural exposure with fun (very important for students). The Taung Rural School Visit we did on 16 April was a good opportunity to do just that. We were a group of 14 people composed of medical, pharmacy and clinical associate students who visited four schools in the Taung area. We mainly talked to the grade 11 and 12 math and science scholars and provided them with information regarding application processes, career options in health sciences and funding options. The Rural Health Club has also left contact details with the schools to assist scholars with their

applications and we already got enquiries from students at the various schools. We also got the opportunity to explore the natural beauty of the area and shared some good stories around a camp fire at night. To summarize the whole project: We went there to inspire, but came back inspired.

This project was made possible by the funding we received from RuDASA, and we would like to sincerely thank them for supporting us.

If anyone knows about any community projects we could help out with or would like to become involved as a mentor etc. our contact details are: witsrhc@gmail.com or you could contact me on 082 789 1966.

Jurgens Staats

Chair: Wits Rural Health Club

Vice Chair: RuDASA Student Committee 🏠



Competition

Been there, done that, got the T-shirt?

If you haven't, the RuDASA shirts will be available again at the RuDASA conference this year, but with a difference! We are looking for a T-Shirt design that will stand out as proudly rural health! Send us your slogan/design on the attached T-Shirt form and send it to us (dr.angela.smith@gmail.com) by 31 July 2010. Please include your name, address, and telephone number on the entry.

The design should be in one colour, cover one side of the shirt (*either* front or back, not both). The design must incorporate the RuDASA logo.

Winners will receive a complimentary T-Shirt/clothing hamper, and their picture published in the post-conference issue of Rural Health update.

Competition is open to all RuDASA members (immediate family and friends can help, but the member must send in the entry)

Judges decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Prizes are not exchangeable for cash.

Prizes will be awarded at the 2010 Rural Health Conference. If you or a representative are unable to attend, please inform us timeously so that alternative arrangements can be made.

RuDASA reserves the right to make slight alterations to the design as may be necessary, after discussion with the winner.

Have fun! 🏠



The bottom line

Strange but true (excerpts from 'Mailadoc' thread 'Strange injuries')

What are the strangest injuries you have encountered in your casualty department? Here are a few..

A couple of weeks ago it was a man who was knocked out of a moving car by a large pumpkin! It hit him in the chest causing him to fall and sustain multiple injuries on the tar road.

Over the week end it was a man slapped by a fish which cut one cheek and bruised the other.

We had a boy brought in bitten on the foot by a snake - which turned out to be a moray eel (yes, we have photos - it was brought in by family members in a Spar packet).

Then there was the Gogo with radius ulna fracture caused by her 25 litre bucket of water falling off her head onto her outstretched forearm...

For more info please visit www.rudasa.org.za, and subscribe to 'mailadoc', our internet discussion list.



Please email any comments/suggestions on this newsletter or requests for your hospital to be featured to the editor: dr.angela.smith@gmail.com



RuDASA T-Shirt Competition 2010



FRONT

RuDASA T-Shirt Competition 2010



BACK