

## Editorial: Juba Teaching Hospital College of Nursing and Midwifery

Health statistics for Southern Sudan indicate the enormous need for more qualified health staff. For example, the country has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world – 2030 deaths per 100,000 births; 135 out of every 1000 Southern Sudanese children die before their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, and there is 1 doctor for every 100,000 people<sup>1</sup>. The Government is well aware of the situation and the need for more trained staff, particularly nurses and midwives.

In March 2008 a team from the St Mary's Hospital, Isle of Wight, UK working with staff at Juba Teaching Hospital identified several problems related to nursing and midwifery in the hospital. Apart from the lack of sufficient trained staff, particularly midwives, the most serious problems were lack of nurse and midwifery trainers and lack of continuing professional development (and even reading materials) leading to lack of basic nursing skills and low morale. The team recommended that Registered Nursing and Midwifery courses should be established at the hospital immediately<sup>2</sup>.

As a consequence of discussions with the Ministry of Health, the **College of Nursing and Midwifery**, a collaborative project between the Government of Southern Sudan, St Mary's Hospital – Juba Teaching Hospital Link, the Real Medicine Foundation, USA (RMF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Children's Fund was born. The RMF and the World Children Fund have contributed significant amounts of money to pump prime this programme.

After a recent visit to Juba I can report that:

- To date, 60 student applications from around the country have been submitted
- The Ministry of Health and the Vice Chancellor of Juba University will meet to finalise the accreditation of the programme.
- The United Nations Development Programme has requested five International United Nations Volunteers and RMF has funding for two more to help direct the programme. UNFPA's Regional Director has assured his agency's full support for human resources to start the programme
- The World Health Organisation has agreed to provide some support for course materials, skills and laboratory equipment.
- The Director General (Nursing & Midwifery) met with the Japanese International Co-operation Agency to discuss construction support in 2010 for buildings for the school.
- A college management board is in the process of formation.

We will report on further developments of this exciting and much needed programme in a future issue of this Bulletin.

Michael Lear  
Director International Relations  
Real Medicine Foundation

### References

1. Wairagala Wakabi *Health Situation Remains Grave in Southern Sudan* Lancet vol 372 July 12 2008 p101
2. *Report of a Visit to Juba, Southern Sudan by a Team of Healthcare Professionals from St Mary's Hospital, Isle of Wight, UK. March 2008.*

**The Southern Sudan Medical Bulletin (SSMB)** is a quarterly publication intended for Healthcare Professionals working in the Southern Sudan or those Healthcare Professionals in other parts of the world seeking information on health in the Southern Sudan.

It aims to offer education and information in all specialities and identify research that will inform the development of Health Services in the Southern Sudan. We plan to include reports of original research, critical/systematic reviews, case reports, clinical photographic materials, obituaries, letters to the Editor, use of drugs, medical news of public interest, nutrition matters, public health issues and stories of the health services in the Southern Sudan in the past.

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**We encourage readers to print copies and pass them to colleagues.**

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