Editorial: Juba College of Nursing and Midwifery

Everyone working in the health services in South Sudan knows that there is a serious shortage of well-qualified nurses and midwives. For example, the following numbers of staff, and the ratio of staff to population, who are presently known to the Directorate of Nursing and Midwifery are:

- Registered Nurses (Diploma in Nursing) 40 (0.4/100,000)
- Registered Midwives 02 (0.02/100,000)
- Certificated Nurses (equivalent to 'British Enrolled Nurses') ~1000 (10/100,000)
- Traditional Birth Attendants (no formal qualifications) 2000 (20/100,000)
- Nurses and Midwives of Southern Sudanese origin working in Kharoum Unknown
- The population of the Southern Sudan was 10,000,000 at the last census two years ago.

More accurate data are presently being collected – but there is no doubt that the numbers fall far short of those needed, particularly for midwives. This presents a big challenge especially as the new constitution of Southern Sudan specifically highlights women’s health as a priority for the country’s well being and future success.

So the opening of the Ministry of Health’s new Juba College of Nursing and Midwifery is an encouraging step forward on the road to improving health services. The first group of trainees are enrolled and in preparatory classes. Plans and funding for a purpose-built college, and the resources needed to equip it, are in place. The Principal, Ms Petronella Wawa, and some tutors have been recruited. As well as the Ministry of Health, other stakeholders include United Nations Population Fund, Real Medicine Foundation, World Children’s Fund, the World Health Organization, St. Mary’s Hospital, Isle of Wight-Juba Hospital Link, the United Nations Development Programme/ Global Fund and the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

We would like to thank all everyone who is supporting the new college; we will give updates on the progress trainees in future issues of this journal.

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For more information on the new college see the article on page 56.

The SSMJ team is pleased to welcome Dr Edward Eremugo Luka to the Editorial Board.