The 14th Annual Bethune Round Table (BRT) Conference

The 14th CNIS Bethune Round Table (BRT) was hosted by McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario; June 5th – 8th. The conference theme was “Improving Global Outcomes through Safer Surgery.” Led by Dr. Brian Cameron, Professor, Pediatric Surgery; Director, McMaster International Surgery Desk, many commented that this was the best BRT ever. The BRT is designed to give health professionals from Canada and other high income countries the opportunity to present and debate concepts of international surgery with each other and colleagues from low and middle income countries. This year there were representatives from Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, Uganda, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe.

The key note address, which was an inspiring discussion of equality, was presented by Dr. James Orbinski who received the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of Doctors Without Borders in 1999. A total of 48 abstracts, the most ever, were selected for podium or poster presentations from 107 submissions. The abstract presentations discussed international surgical and obstetrical initiatives from Asia, Africa and South America.

Since 2001, more than 400 speakers from 42 countries have presented papers at the BRT, with 40% of them from low income countries. Following the conference Drs. Tarek Razek and Ronald Lett held an Instructors workshop for CNIS Trauma Team Training course for international participants at the BRT. The BRT originally began in Toronto but now rotates around Canada. June 5-7, 2015, the 15th annual BRT conference will be held in Calgary, Alberta.

What’s New

CNIS members attended a Special Meeting on September 7, 2014 to approve the transitioning to the new NFP (Not-for-Profit Corporations) Act.

The Annual General Meeting is scheduled for November 21st and 22nd, 2014. (See article Page 4)

Renew Your Membership:

Regular : $100
Student : $50
Retired : $50

Pay online or by Cheque.

Upcoming Events

CNIS Annual General Meeting and Strategic Planning Session
Date: November 21st and 22nd 2014 (Friday & Saturday)
Venue: 105-1985 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., Canada, V6J4Y3
AGM Time: 2:00 PM (Friday) November 21st, 2014
Residents from Ottawa Teach in Tanzania

We had the pleasure of teaching the CNIS SOO course in Tanga, Tanzania in March 2014 after completing the Instructor's course in Ottawa. The Instructor's course helped us expand our teaching skills, learn tips and tricks from previous instructors, and hear about what to expect in Tanzania itself. We met participants who had varied motivations for becoming SOO instructors and diverse prior experiences.

In our roles as instructors, we were lucky to have an experienced SOO instructor, Dr. Hassan Shenassa and Dr. Badria Mushi, a devoted coordinator in Tanga. The students were keen and motivated to learn. It was wonderful to see the Assistant Medical Officers (AMO) students mastering hand ties with practice and manage various obstetrical complications in simulations. From the local instructors, we learned why scarcity of resources, local cultural beliefs and differences in patient baseline characteristics, lead to different obstetrical practices than we have in Canada. We also picked up a few words of Kiswahili on the way! The students certainly value their chances to learn and consolidate surgical and obstetrical skills. Overall, we feel that we gained teaching skills, friendships, improved awareness of cultural differences in care and many fond memories that we will not quickly forget.

-Drs. Aisling Clancy and Jenna Gale, Obstetrics and Gynecology Residents, Ottawa, ON

June to August, 2014 in East Africa

June, July and August are busy teaching months in Africa but not the best time for Canadian Volunteers. In June Dr. Paul Moroz taught two FIRST courses in Machame and Dr. Bill Pollet taught two ESS courses in Mwanza. However, in July and August, the 9 courses and 2 strategic planning sessions conducted were implemented by CNIS International Director Dr. Ronald Lett without Canadian volunteers but with the enthusiastic participation of African Surgeons, Obstetricians and General Practitioners.

SOO courses (one instructors and two providers) were conducted in Tanga and Arusha, FIRST courses (one instructors and two providers) were conducted in Machame and Mafinga with the support of the DFATD (formerly CIDA) and two TBSI provider courses supported by the Bondi foundation were conducted in Mwanza and in Kampala. In addition, the strategic planning sessions were conducted for the skills labs in Kampala (supported by Harbinger Foundation) and Mwanza (supported by the Donner Canadian Foundation). A total of 178 Ugandan and Tanzania students and instructors benefited from these activities which provided Assistant medical officers with C section capabilities, medical students with surgical skills and clinical officers with fundamental technical and appropriate referral skills.
Dr. Jan Christilaw is pictured with the nurse midwives, taking the FIRST for Midwives Instructor’s Course on May 17th in Dodoma, the capital of Tanzania. The following week this team taught the FIRST Course to two batches of in-service diploma level nurse midwifery students.

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC) was contracted by CNIS to teach 11 Basic Emergency Obstetrical Skills courses to classes of 40 AMOs during the last 3 years. Pictured here in May is the first year class from Tanga, under a Mbuya tree.

Dr. Heather Scott, an obstetrician from Dalhousie, taught two Essential Surgical Skills (ESS) courses in late April to early May in Mwanza. Here she is pictured teaching obstetrics at the Skills Lab.

Skills Labs Sustain Surgical Teaching

Drs. Lett, Chandika and Engineer Kiwanika inspect the Mwanza skills Lab during construction. Donated by Donner Canadian and Bondi Foundations, the skills lab is now complete.

The CNIS structured courses have been taught in many venues but the ideal situation is where there is dedicated skills lab. It is now accepted that the use of skills labs is an obligatory part of an academic surgical and obstetrical skills education.

The key issue concerning labs is that when an institution has one there is always a good teaching environment. Skills labs should look and feel like an operating room, having good light and plumbing, and be provided with narrow tables which permit the learners to practice not only procedures but assisting each other. Secure storage for valuable surgical instruments and teaching aids and cold storage for biological equipment is also necessary.

A note of caution is that skills labs should only be built in institutions that have a good track record of structured clinical training. Since the first skills lab was established in Addis Ababa Ethiopia in 2006 CNIS has established four other labs in Ethiopia. There have been 2 labs each built in Uganda and Tanzania. In 2014 one new lab was opened in Mekele, Ethiopia another in Mwanza, Tanzania and the lab in Gondor, Ethiopia were upgraded as was the lab in Kampala, Uganda.

These facilities have been established with Canadian Government support as well as the Donner Canadian Foundation, The Harbinger Foundation and the Bondi Foundation. The CNIS hopes to establish other labs in partnership with these and other funders. Before the first lab was built, it had been suggested that skills labs could not be established in Africa. Not only have they been put in place, but others are following the CNIS lead in this regard. This means that progressive surgical teaching is being sustained in Africa.
CNIS General Meeting(s)

It may be a bit confusing as the CNIS held a Special General Meeting September 7th and has called for its Annual General Meeting November 21st and 2nd in Vancouver.

The special meeting was held to make CNIS compliant with the new Canada Not for Profit Corporations Act section 297. Chaired by Dr. Tarek Razek and attended by 14 members the resolution to apply for the certificate of continuance under the new Act was approved.

We are expecting a call for proposals by the Canadian Government in the very near future but in the mean time we have the last amount of funding from Department of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development (DFATD) for work in Tanga, Tanzania as well as support from the three family foundations Donner Canadian, Bondi and the Harbinger. As the AGM is two months away the opportunity was taken at the special general meeting to approve an interim 2014-2015 budget of $618,914.

In preparation for the November 21st AGM the CNIS would like to encourage all its members to renew their participation by paying their annual dues of 100 dollars regular and 50 dollars for students and retirees. This can be done online at www.cnis.ca/how-to-help/donate-now/

Kudos to our volunteers

The success of CNIS projects is embedded in creating synergies among Canadian volunteers and local partners in Africa to achieve the teaching outcomes of the CNIS courses. Our volunteers have been instrumental to our implementation of courses offered in Canada and Africa.

CNIS has been keen on assuring the timely and cost effective production of models and manuals that are easily adapted to the resource limited settings in Africa. Models are designed by volunteer surgical specialists and crafted by non-surgical volunteers. The volunteers assist with adapting the manuals to suit the changing teaching environments. Course manuals are required for both the instructors and students courses. Our surgical volunteers assist in transporting completed models and manuals from Vancouver to Africa. CNIS would not be successful without the help of its dedicated volunteers.

The CNIS courses include ESS, SOO, FIRST, TBSI, SHR TTT, EOMC, EBM and SSSL. Confused by the acronyms? Please visit our website at http://www.cnis.ca/what-we-do/course-list/.

-Jackie Omondi, Project Coordinator

Visit our website at www.CNIS.ca, where you can find the updates. You may also visit us on Facebook, by searching for the Canadian Network for International Surgery. “LIKE US” and read more about current courses and view photos of the latest trips to Africa.

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