In November 2012, the CNIS held its Annual General Meeting and Strategic planning session. The number of board members was increased to 11. The new positions were filled by obstetricians, Dr. Wylam Faught of Ottawa and Dr. Robert Hutchison from Hamilton. John Bell Honorary Council for Ivory Coast also joined the board. For the first time the number of obstetricians exceeds the number of surgeons on the CNIS board. The officers and committee chairs are:

Dr. Tarek Razek - Chair, Board of Directors
Ms. Genelle Leifso – Chair, Program Committee
Mr. John Bell – Chair, Public Engagement Committee
Dr. Andrew Howard – Chair, Bethune Round Table

Following the AGM, a strategic planning session was led by Mr. Rob Hallam who had volunteered to assist in developing a new strategic plan. In December, Mr. Hallam became the CNIS Director of Operations, to strengthen the leadership of CNIS. In its 18 year history CNIS has successfully faced many challenges and this is also the case for 2013 as one of the two CIDA funded programs, Safer Surgery, Obstetrics and Communities in Africa (SSOCA), will conclude on August 31st 2013.

CIDA has not had a Call for Proposals for almost two years which means that within six months CNIS will only have one CIDA funded project - Safer Obstetrics in Rural Tanzania (SORT). CNIS is working very hard to complete all of the activities in the SSOCA project, in order to ensure that CNIS will leave a legacy in Uganda, Ethiopia and Rwanda.

Although the lack of CIDA funding is a critical issue for CNIS and other NGO’s, the situation also provides an opportunity - an opportunity to examine our current activities, scan the environment and context in which we have been working, and explore possible new initiatives based on our unique capabilities. New partnerships are being sought and former partnerships are being augmented. The challenges will be faced and we look forward to the support of our membership as the CNIS moves forward.

EOM (ESSENTIAL OSTEOMYELITIS MANAGEMENT COURSE)
When: Sunday May 12, 2013
Where: CNIS, Vancouver. Call 1-604-739-4708
A joint project of CNIS and CBMI

PLACE OF SURGICAL CARE IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
When: June 1, 2013
Where: University of Alberta, Edmonton. Call 1-604-739-4708

ESS (ESSENTIAL SURGICAL SKILLS) COURSE
When: June 7-8, 2013
Where: Dalhousie University, Halifax. Call 1-604-739-4708

CNIS AGM: OCTOBER 11 & 12, 2013
**LIFE SKILLS IN GAMBELLA, ETHIOPIA**

The Peacebuilding Program, first implemented in Axum, Ethiopia in 2007, continues for another year. At the beginning of each school year the program is kicked off with a life skills instructor’s course for the Grade 5 teachers and administrators. Each of the 8 Axum schools is twinned with a Canadian school.

Most recently, CNIS has received funding from the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) at the Canadian embassy in Ethiopia in order to develop an adaptation of its peacebuilding program in Gambella, Ethiopia. This project is a collaboration with the Anglican Church in Ethiopia. In early January, more than 50 teachers from 21 primary schools were trained to teach the program to Grade 5 children. The pupils’ manuals have been translated from English into Amharic, Tigrinya, Anuak and Nuer; and more than 2000 manuals, together with exercise books and pens distributed.

There are serious sectarian problems in Gambella between the resident Anuak peoples, the nomadic Nuer tribe and the Highland settlers. CNIS looks forward to working with the Anglican Church in making Gambella a more harmonious community by teaching life skills to children from all backgrounds.

CNIS will submit another funding request to continue this project both in Gambella and to support the course in Gambella and Axum which is being currently supported with CIDA funds.

**ACCESS & SPORT NETWORKING MEETING**

In late January, CNIS met with its Tanzanian partners in order to review activities and courses over the past year and plan the year ahead. The meeting took place in the town of Usa River, at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro, surrounded by game parks which provide the public face of Tanzania to the world. In response to the country’s health needs, particularly devastating for its mothers and children, CNIS is working on CIDA-funded health programming to ensure safer maternal health and safer communities.

CNIS meets annually with its African partners. In Tanzania this engaged partners focused on rural obstetrical care, safer surgical care and injury surveillance and control. The meeting in January included 18 Tanzanian partners, CIDA, SOGC (the Canadian obstetrical partner for rural obstetrical care), and CNIS.

An objective of the CNIS partner meetings is to review curriculum of all of the CNIS structured courses. The Tanzania meeting concentrated its curriculum review on the following courses: Fundamental Interventions, Referral and Safe Transfer (FIRST); Essential Surgical Skills (ESS); SOGC’s ALARM International program (AIP); Structured Operative Obstetrics (SOO); and Trauma Team Training (TTT) - taught by the Injury Control Center Tanzania (ICCT). The curriculum reviews highlighted new techniques and technology that impact surgical and obstetrical best practices.

A key part of the 3-day meeting was to exchange information and learning. The meeting of the partners resulted in new connections alliances. One promising outcome was the formation of an advocacy group with a mandate of developing sustainability of skills acquisition in the long term.

**HERNIA COURSE: ETHIOPIA & UGANDA**

The two most important surgical procedures in Africa are Inguinal Hernia Repair and Cesarean Section. CNIS has a dedicated course for both of these procedures - the structured operative obstetrics (SOO) and the Hernia Repair Course (HRC). Three HRC Instructor and 3 HRC provider courses were held in February and March. Dr. William Pollett from Memorial University taught in Mkele, Ethiopia; Dr. Ghee Hwang of the Canadian Association of General Surgeons taught in Gulu, Uganda; and Dr. Mark Hardy of McGill University in Mbarara, Uganda. 8 surgeons were certified as instructors and trained 15 students. The HR course includes 3 days of laboratory teaching and hernia repair under supervision in the operating room on patients.
SORT UPDATE

ESS Providers
Location: Moshi, Mwanza, Mbeya, Tanga.
# of courses: 6 Participants: 96 male & 45 female.

SOO Providers
Location: Moshi, Mwanza, Mbeya, Tanga.
# of courses: 10 Participants: 131 male & 55 female.

SOO Train the Trainer
Instructors: Drs. Wylam Faught, Robin Fairfull-Smith, Al Felix, Alphonce Chandika.
Location: Mafinga, Machame, Kibaha, Sengerema.
# of courses: 12 Participants: 180 male & 96 female.

SORT Teaching Activity
In January, Dr. Robert Hutchison and Dr. Christine Bloch did a mega Structured Operative Obstetrics (SOO) Workshop in Mbeya, Tanzania conducting the lab portion for all the AMO (Assistant Medical Officers) students there in an 11 day period. Meanwhile in Sengerema, Dr. Suzanne Roberge conducted the same course for the AMO students from Mwanza, Tanzania. Dr. Ronald Lett with Dr. Pendo Mlay conducted an SOO instructor and provider course in Moshi, Tanzania. The Fundamental Interventions Referral and Safe Transfer (FIRST) course was conducted in Machame, Tanzania for two groups of Clinical Officer students by Dr. Robin Fairfull-Smith. Additionally, another two groups of Clinical Officer students were trained in Kibaha, Tanzania by Dr. Bill East with support from Dr. Robin Fairfull-Smith for the initial course.

FIRST Course Mafinga
Mafinga is a small town in the Southern Highlands of Tanzania straddling the highway to Malawi, Zambia and Southern Congo. Away from the busy highway it is an area known for tea plantations and the production of timber. It is also the site of the Mafinga Clinical Officer Training Centre.

As part of the Safer Obstetrics in Rural Tanzania (SORT) program funded by CIDA, CNIS brought the FIRST course (fundamental interventions, referral and safe transfer) to the Clinical Officers School. In November, 10 future instructors were trained. With the assistance of Dr. Grace Mzengi, the head of the COTC, and Dr. Juma Mkamba as local course director, two provider courses were run over 5 days. A total of 53 trainee Clinical Officers graduated from the FIRST course and were very excited by the experience. The local staff were so impressed with the FIRST course that by the end of the week they had identified a room to develop a permanent skills lab. Their hope is to incorporate skills teaching into their regular curriculum.

Skills Lab in Kampala

CNIS has established a second surgical skills lab in Uganda in Kampala. The first was in Mbarara. There are also skills labs in Moshi, Tanzania and Addis Ababa, Jimma, Awassa and Gondar, all in Ethiopia. The lab was inaugurated by conducting an ESS (Essential Surgical Skills) instructors’ course in February. The Department of Surgery at Mulago Hospital uses the integrated format for teaching ESS. On Fridays during their surgical attachment, the medical students take skills training. ESS is directed by Dr. Olivia Kituuka and the head of Department, Dr. Sam Kaggwa. The skills lab is a valuable addition, supporting the medical training of the students at Mulago Hospital.
CNIS Nursing Project - Evolving

Demand for the Safe Surgery Saves Lives Nursing Course (SSSLN), piloted in 2009, continues. Since 2011 it has been taught seven times at teaching hospitals in Gondar, Awassa, and Mekelle in Ethiopia, and in Kampala, Uganda. Four experienced and certified Canadian instructors guide novice instructors keen to share their knowledge via this structured course.

UBC affiliated surgeons (ENT, Pediatric General Surgery, Orthopedic Trauma, and Gynecology - oncology) have been working at Mulago Hospital, Kampala for more than four years. They have taken Canadian nurses, but have been unable to offer organized continuing education for the Ugandan perioperative nurses. In response to the perioperative nursing issues identified by Vickie Grandinetti and Alicia Green (perioperative nurses accompanying the team) in their February-March, 2012 report to the Uganda Sustainable Trauma Orthopedic Program (a UBC trauma orthopedic initiative), a collaboration between the CNIS and USTOP was proposed and accepted. The plan involved the SSSL course being offered to Mulago Hospital perioperative nurses and anesthetists – beginning with those who are working in the specific ORs (i.e. main, ortho, ER) where the UBC affiliated teams are working.

The first SSSL course was given in September 2012 to 24 Ugandan nurses. Genelle Leifso and Alicia Green, CNIS (SSSL) certified instructors, reviewed the practice environment before the course began and then taught the course. They then worked with the Canadian surgeons modeling a team approach to perioperative patient care, including consistent implementation of the WHO 2009 Safe Surgery Checklist, while providing ongoing mentoring and coaching of the Uganda nurses. This April three CNIS (SSSL) certified instructors return to Mulago Hospital with the USTOP team, once again teaching the course, coaching and mentoring staff, auditing perioperative practices, and aiding in practice improvement at this site. For further details about the first collaboration read USTOP report - http://www.orthosurgery.ubc.ca/ustop_tripreport.html

It is anticipated that these surgical teams will continue to work with the Ugandan professionals for at least 3 years. During this time, the course will be offered to those who have not taken it, and practice audits by the returning teams will provide data regarding practice changes occurring as a result of the course content. In addition, the needs identified may form the basis for future course development applicable to this and similar low-income practice environments.

Partnerships

Funding for independent perioperative nursing initiatives is difficult to access. This collaboration provides significant cost sharing, and is beneficial in providing both education and practice support to less-advantaged nursing colleagues. Other opportunities are welcomed. We hope that this 3-year collaboration is a prototype for additional partnerships with university-based surgical groups across Canada.

Honorary Life Member

At the Annual General Meeting Dr. Ronald Lett, CNIS International Director nominated Mr. Phil Hassen as an honorary life member. Mr. Hassen was the former CNIS Board Chair who held numerous other positions including President of the CNIS. This honorary appointment was unanimously approved by the Board Members.

CNIS Funders and Donors: Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Donner Foundation, Bob and Judy Hager Family Fund, Harbinger Foundation, The Rotary Clubs of Oakville Trafalgar ON and White Rock, BC, Mr. John Bell, CNIS Organizational & Individual Members and friends of CNIS

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Canadian Network for International Surgery
1985 W. Broadway, Suite 105
Vancouver BC V6l 4Y3 | Ph: 604-739-4708
Website: www.cnis.ca

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