CIDA supports CNIS Safer Obstetrics Program in rural Tanzania

$1,863,002 in new funding from the Government of Canada, provided through the Canadian International Development Agency, CIDA, will give CNIS, in partnership with the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC), the ability to reduce maternal and perinatal mortality in rural Tanzania. Our project is part of the Muskoka Initiative Partnership Program.

Over three years, CNIS will deliver Essential Surgical Skills and Structured Operative Obstetrics courses to Assistant Medical Officer (AMO) students in Moshi, Mwanza, Mebeya and Tanga. SOGC will teach their emergency obstetrics program. This will enhance the skills of the AMOs who provide most of the obstetrical care in rural Tanzania.

At the clinical officer schools in Mchama, Sengerema, Kibaha and Mfinga, CNIS will teach the Fundamental Interventions Referral and Safe Transfer (FIRST) course, providing students with the skills needed when posted to rural health centres. The courses will strengthen the technical abilities of these maternal health care workers and are expected to reduce the unacceptable level of maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity. The maternal mortality rate in Tanzania is 950/100,000 births, compared to 5/100,000 births in Canada. Currently, only 43% of women giving birth in Tanzania have access to skilled attendants. As a result, women die daily from hemorrhage, obstructed labour, sepsis, and eclampsia during childbirth. Many who survive have serious complications.

CNIS surgeons and obstetricians contribute 33% of their expenses, making them lead benefactors for our projects. However, we will need to raise an additional $225,000 every year of this 3-year project to meet our goals. Together with SOGC and your support, we expect to significantly reduce maternal mortality in rural Tanzania.

CNIS will continue with our surgical skills and injury control courses in Dar es Salaam, Moshi and Mwanza through our existing CIDA support.

Training role in Afghanistan

As of 2011, the Canadian military has switched to a non-combat training role in Afghanistan. CNIS has been asked to assist Canadian military health personnel in that transition.

In June of 2011, perioperative nursing instructors Genelle Leifso and Vickie Grandinetti conducted a Safe Surgery Saves Lives (SSSL) instructor course for nurses in Vancouver. The majority of the participants were military nurses, who will be deployed in Afghanistan. In Ottawa, Drs. Robert Tayor and Robin Fairfull-Smith conducted an Essential Surgical Skills (ESS) course for military paramedics, who will also be deployed as trainers in Afghanistan. The military engaged CNIS in these activities, as they found our courses were unique in teaching nursing and surgical skills for use in developing countries. It is expected that CNIS will continue training Canadian military health professionals on an annual basis.

This is an opportunity for CNIS to indirectly help the people of Afghanistan and is also a source of revenue for teaching these courses in Africa.

IN THIS ISSUE...

Essential Surgical Skills to Mwanza ........................................ 2
Royal Alexandra supports Moshi ........................................... 2
Obstetrics in Uganda ............................................................. 2
ESS highlights + ESS Uganda ................................................ 3
CNIS returns to Addis .......................................................... 3
CNIS in Guyana ................................................................. 4
Hamilton research on Guyana ............................................... 4
ASAP conference ............................................................... 4
AGM and strategic meeting .................................................. 5
African market ................................................................. 5
Bethune Round Table ......................................................... 5
Portrait: Dr. Al Felix .......................................................... 5
New CNIS T-shirts ............................................................. 6
On the cutting edge ............................................................ 6
Essential Surgical Skills to Mwanza

The ESS course was introduced to a third Tanzanian medical school, the Bugando Medical College in Mwanza, in May 2011. Drs. Ronald Lett and Mark Hardy started the program, collaborating with local surgeon Dr. Alphonse Chandika, who was appointed ESS Patron, and his registrar Dr. Vihar Kotecha, who was appointed ESS Director.

After offering the instructors course, we conducted the ESS providers course for half of the 60 medical students in May, while the other half completed the course in August under the supervision of Tanzanian instructors and Dr. Al Felix of Memorial University. The positive program reception was documented through a formal survey by Dr. Katrina Mitchell of Cornell University. Rural areas around Mwanza have almost no trained physicians, so further educating these students will have a major impact on the health of this impoverished country. The 2011-2012 courses in Mwanza were supported by the Bondi Foundation Inc.

Royal Alexandra Hospital supports teaching lab in Moshi, Tanzania

A team from the Royal Alexandra Hospital (RAH) in Edmonton climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro to raise funds not only for the hospital, but also for the CNIS programs at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre. The team toured the new skills lab and met students, as well as Provost Kaie, Dean Mteta, Head of Surgery Dr. Kondo and ESS director and codirector Drs. Msuaya and Tema. Dr. Ronald Lett presented CNIS’ work and the Edmonton team were shown the surgical, obstetrical and anesthetist skills taught in the Essential Surgical Skills course.

CNIS would like to thank Sharlene Rutherford for organizing the climb and helping to arrange the generous support. The $50,000 donation will contribute to the cost-sharing requirements for our CIDA projects in Tanzania. Dr. Zaheer Lakhani of the RAH Foundation, who worked on a Cameroon Project with Dr. Lett, met with CNIS president Phil Hassen in Edmonton to discuss further collaboration.

Enthusiasm for Obstetrics courses in Uganda!

Eleven Structured Operative Obstetrics courses, more than anywhere else in the world, have been taught at Mulago, a hospital that delivers almost 30,000 babies each year!

An SOO Instructors course was held at Mulago Hospital in Kampala on August 29th and August 31st, 2011. Twenty instructors were certified.

Three courses this year were facilitated by the local director, Dr. Susan Obore, an obstetrician/gynecologist who also specializes in urogynecology. She knows that if a woman does not have a C-section when needed she may end up with a baby who dies and/or a vesico-vaginal fistula.

Vancouver volunteers make “abdominal walls” and other parts needed for the course. At Mulago Hospital, there can be as many as five annual courses for interns and first-year residents. Dr. Obore and Sister Emily, the nurse in charge of the Labour Suite Theatre, have now arranged for the parts to be made locally, supporting a local tailor and helping the SOO staff run the courses independently.

Since the first SOO instructors course was held by Drs. Lorraine Woolford (Obstetrical Associate, CNIS) and Bob Hutchison (Hamilton, Ontario), at the Mbarara Referral Hospital in 2010, the instructors in Mbarara have been able to include all their interns and first-year residents in the SOO course - and every one of the participants have completed the six supervised C-sections and been awarded the certificate from CNIS.

Maternal mortality is improving in Uganda, and CNIS is doing its part to help.
Highlights of ESS courses in Africa from July to September

With the active participation of CNIS staff, volunteers, and African partners, the ESS program has taught 137 students and certified 10 instructors this quarter. In July, Drs. Colleen Haney and Dave Simon joined Drs. Kondo Chilonga and David Msuya in Moshi, Tanzania to teach 25 medical students. Later that month, Dr. Ronald Lett taught 12 instructors in Kigali, Rwanda, and in September these instructors, under the leadership of Dr. Ntakiyiruta Georges, with Dr. Roger Tabah from Montreal, taught 20 students. In Kampala, Uganda, Drs. Sam Kaggwa and Olivia Kituuka ran ESS in an integrated format every Friday. In Mbarara, Uganda, Drs. Bitariho Deogratias and Twesigye Deus continued the program with another course, as did Drs. Samson Esseye and Chuchu Girma in Jimma, Ethiopia. Drs. François Cabana and Ronald Lett, with Professor Gangaly Diallo and Nouhoum Ongoiba, conducted the fourth ESS providers course for 26 surgical residents in Bamako, Mali. The ESS program continues to be very active in the five African countries that receive CIDA support.

Capacity building in Uganda

Professor Sam Luboga of the College of Health Sciences at Makerere University in Kampala obtained a grant from the International Development Research Centre in Ottawa. The objective of this project is to develop surgical capacity in rural Uganda. CNIS has agreed under a formal Memorandum of Understanding to contribute its curriculum to support this project, which will train medical and clinical officers from 45 different centres in Uganda. In November, practitioners from several rural centres in Uganda took the Essential Surgical Skills course. Evaluation will be a major component of this project and CNIS looks forward to seeing the results, in particular the contribution being made by our ESS course.

CNIS returns to Addis at St. Paul’s Hospital Millennium Medical College

Two years after CNIS turned over the Skills Lab to the Department of Surgery at the Black Lion Hospital, we have initiated an ESS program at the St. Paul’s Hospital Millennium Medical College in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. We signed an MOU in October and we led an Essential Surgical Skills instructors course from November 23-25. Nineteen instructors, including three women, were certified.

With this training and the donation of the ESS surgical teaching equipment, St Paul’s is now fully capable of running ESS courses. The teaching of ESS providers courses for their medical students is expected to start in early 2012. The Department of Surgery named Dr. Befekadu Lema as the ESS Patron and Dr. Engida Abebe as the ESS Director, with Dr. Esubalew Taddese as co-director.

St Paul’s is the first of the hospital-based medical colleges established in Ethiopia and is expected to be centre for developing other institutions throughout Ethiopia. This central role for St. Paul’s in the planning of the Ministry of Health makes this new relationship an important initiative for CNIS.
CNIS expands Guyana courses

CNIS has supported the activities of the Canadian Association of General Surgeons (CAGS) and McMaster University in Guyana since 2006. Trauma Team Training has continued on a regular basis since 2006. CNIS has implemented the instructor courses, while the providers courses have been conducted by our Canadian partners and the Georgetown Public Hospital.

McMaster recently developed a TTT refresher course, which was piloted in November 2010 and in 2011. The 2011 TTT refresher course, which had 6 male and 12 female participants, was led by Dr. Navindra Rambaran. As part of our agreements with partners, advances made with our TTT and intellectual property are shared. McMaster is preparing a refresher course manual, which CNIS will publish to make the course available in Uganda and Tanzania.

In November 2011, the Essential Surgical Skills course was introduced to Guyana under the leadership of Drs. Brian Cameron and Shiliundra Rajkumar. Three Guyanese instructors were certified to teach ESS when they were studying in Ottawa in the fall of 2010. In addition to these two structured courses, CNIS facilitates the participation of CAGS surgeons involved in postgraduate surgical training, as well as the CAGS Diabetic Foot project, which is conducted by Drs. Brian Ostrow and Madan Rambaran.

ASAP international conference

The 4th Annual Alliance for Surgery and Anesthesia Presence (ASAP) meeting was hosted by the University of California San Diego School of Medicine from November 9-11, 2011. The meeting focused on bringing together the many disciplines that are integral to surgical systems in low resource areas.

CNIS board member Dr. Andrew Howard and international Director Dr. Ronald Lett attended the conference. Dr. Lett presented on CNIS’ Structured Courses and led a discussion of the serious obstacles impeding the goals of international surgery. Dr. Howard is vice chair of the WHO Surgical Mission & Partnerships Coordinating Committee, which met the day prior to the ASAP meeting. CNIS contributed a low-cost pediatric surgical textbook to all participants at the meeting. The text, entitled *Surgical Care for Children, A Guide for Primary Referral Hospitals*, was co-authored by Dr. Stephen Bickler of UCSD and Dr. Emmanuel Ameh of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Canada-Guyana research partnership

Three physicians from Guyana joined Canadian surgical colleagues for a workshop in research methods in surgical education and simulation in Hamilton, Ontario in July 2011. The purpose of the workshop was to develop two collaborative research proposals with themes including the use of high-fidelity simulation in trauma training, and the impact of TTT on resuscitation practice in the emergency department. The research topics, leadership and action plans were developed jointly.

The proposals, building on previous Canada-Guyana work, will evaluate the Trauma Team Training (TTT) program, which CNIS started teaching to local physicians, nurses and other emergency personnel in Guyana in 2006.
Annual General Meeting and CNIS strategic plans set in Vancouver

The CNIS annual general meeting was held in Vancouver in early November. Six board members were re-elected to two-year terms: Ms. Linda Akagi, Dr. Jan Christilaw, Ms. Genelle Leifso, Mr. Khwezi Mbolekwa, Dr. Paul Moroz and Dr. Tarek Razek. Dr. Andrew Howard and Mr. Doug Wallis will continue for one more year. One new member, chartered accountant Joan Hill, was also elected for two years. Tarek Razek continues as chair and Khwezi Mbolekwa as vice chair.

Financial statements were reviewed and the auditors reappointed. Two members were presented with ten-year service pins: Doug Wallis, who was board chair for three years and continues as finance chair, and Elizabeth Schaef, the CNIS office manager, who has anchored the Vancouver operations through thick and thin. The strategic planning focused on the completion of the $2.1 million, five-country Safer Surgery Obstetrics and African communities program, the implementation of the $1.8 million Safer Obstetrics in rural Tanzania project, a presentation by Bonnie McCoy on project evaluation and a discussion by CNIS President Phil Hassen on fundraising opportunities.

The strategic plan is projected to be completed by mid-2012 and will be the basis of the next CNIS CIDA program proposal.

CNIS celebrates all things African

Our African market has become a much-anticipated feature of the Vancouver summer scene. Twenty African nations and a dozen non-profit organizations participated in the 2011 festivities. After opening greetings in English, French, Swahili, and Amharic, and an Ethiopian coffee ceremony, we welcomed WUBIT Ethiopian Youth Dancers and 21 Anocholi Cultural Dancers from Southern Sudan. The event also included an African fashion show modeled by youth from Nigeria, Mali, Botswana and Ghana and the Ubiquitous Rhythms drum circle.

CNIS would like to thank MC Anar Rajabali and DJ Worku, our event supporters, participants, performers and our hard-working volunteers for making this year’s market a spectacular cultural celebration.

Bethune Round Table

The 11th Annual CNIS Bethune Round Table was hosted by the McGill University Health Centre and the McGill Center for Global Surgery. The meeting, which was organized by Drs. Dan Deckelbaum and Tarek Razek, was an overwhelming success, with participation from over 12 low- and middle-income nations from Africa, Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia. The focus of this year’s meeting was on surgical education, capacity building, disaster response, and preparedness in resource-limited settings.

The Bethune Round Table provides an excellent forum for future work and collaboration in international surgery at a time when we are recognizing the importance of long-lasting partnerships to create essential surgical capacity-building programs in these countries.

We look forward to ongoing dedication to international surgery and further discussion and debate at next year’s Bethune Round Table in Toronto from May 25-27, 2012.

Q: What is your most rewarding moment with CNIS?
A: We had run our first ESS course in Mekele for half of the first graduating class. When the remaining students heard how rewarding the course was, they approached the Dean and threatened to boycott classes unless he promised to ask us to provide them with the same opportunity.

Q: Does CNIS work make a difference?
A: The enthusiasm and gratitude of the students and surgical staff reinforces the idea that support of their teaching programs is having a significant impact.

Q: Do you have advice for others surgeons interested in volunteering with CNIS?
A: The time commitment for these courses is short, and supporting our African colleagues can have an enormous impact. The personal rewards are significant and may change your perspective on life.
New CNIS T-shirts showcase the winner of our design competition

At least a dozen submissions were made to the CNIS T-shirt design competition. Though there were many great ideas, the African continent outlined by surgical instruments was the clear winner. The design is by Romanian artist and graphic designer Silvana Rusan, who is also responsible for some of our amazing event designs. CNIS would like to thank all our volunteers who submitted artwork and Proper Design for help with printing.

The T-shirts are available for purchase in our office ($20) or through the CNIS web store. www.cnis.ca/store

ON THE CUTTING EDGE

- **Sincere thanks** - CNIS wishes to acknowledge and sincerely thank Dr. Jan Christilaw of the BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre ($15,000 donation), Dr. Mike Wansbrough of the Harbinger Foundation ($5,000 donation) and all our friends and supporters whose donations of $500, $800 and $1000 helped the CNIS’ year-end fundraising campaign exceed $45,000. Thank you all for your continued support! CNIS cannot achieve our goals in Africa without your dedication, both financially, as well as through contributions of your personal and professional time and effort. Africa will be better because of you!
- **Dr. David Mulder Trauma Scholar** - Dr. Tarek Razek of the Montreal General Hospital and the CNIS board chair is the first McGill surgeon to be appointed the Dr. David S. Mulder Distinguished Surgeon in Trauma.
- **In Memoriam** - A donation was made to CNIS in the memory of Irene Muriel Pearcy, who passed away on September 7th in Grande Prairie, Alberta.
- **CNIS surgeons co-authors of textbook written for African surgeons** - Drs. Paul Moroz of Ottawa and Brian Cameron of Hamilton were among more than 150 international surgical experts invited to contribute to a major textbook, *Pediatric Surgery: A Comprehensive Text for Africa*, released in May 2011.
- **Evaluating Surgical Needs** - Dr. Dan Jenkin, one of four UBC residents with a travel scholarship supported by CNIS, was in Gondar zone and Bahdar, Ethiopia in September and October doing research on surgical training and essential surgery as part of his master’s in international health from Curtin University in Perth, Australia.
- **Loyal service** - CNIS will bid farewell to Grace Green, CNIS office assistant in Vancouver, after three years of loyal service.
- **Five Memoranda of Understanding** - CNIS has signed new MOUs with the department of surgery of the National University of Rwanda and with St. Paul’s Hospital Millennium Medical College in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Renewed MOUs have been signed with the departments of surgery in Jimma University and Hawassa University in Ethiopia and the departments of surgery and obstetrics in Mbarara, Uganda.
- **Our condolences** - Bayush Hagos, a community worker and one of the original supporters of CNIS, died in Burnaby, BC on September 1, 2011.
- **$10,000 in scholarships** - UBC residents Drs. Flora-Hua Teng, Dan Jenkin, Anali Dadgostar and Lise Leveille have been awarded this year’s Branch for International Surgery research scholarships through the assistance of CNIS CIDA grants.
- **Generous support for Gulu** - Dr. Ghee Hwang and his wife Teresa of Vernon, BC, raised $13,000 for CNIS’ work in Gulu, Uganda, where Dr. Hwang has taught Essential Surgical Skills four times.