

The children's cancer project in Tanzania – April-May Update 2011.

To all our many friends and supporters,

I would first of all like to thank you all once again for your continued support and encouragement. We have been on a journey which began in 2006 and continues today.

And we are excited to report on the recent progress we have made.

April began with our first ever child. Ntangu, finally completed her 2 years long treatment for leukaemia. As you can see she is very pleased. Her father may not look it but inside he's dancing! I'm pretty chuffed too!! 😊 We have many more almost through but the first is always exciting. We plan to review her carefully for the next few years but are extremely hopeful that she is cured. Thank you everyone who has supported us as you have helped to give Ntangu back his beautiful young daughter.



Our second big news of April 2011 – Thursday the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2011 to be exact is that finally after struggling for more than 3 full years we managed to move the children from their old ward at the Ocean Road Cancer Institute to their shiny new home at the New Paediatric Complex at Muhimbili National Hospital.

The old ward.....



On the move.....



The New ward at the new Paediatric Complex MNH.....



Follow the animals.... :-)



It's been a long tiring  
journey.....



But finally we would like to welcome you to our wards – Upendo(Love) and Tumiani (Hope)  
(Ujasiri – strength will be our hostel in the very near future)



Little Tobias is at the door to welcome you inside.



Clean, bright, beautiful. It was worth the wait.



And already we are happy to report amazing progress in the care we are now able to provide to the children.

Thank you to the entire team at MNH for welcoming us so warmly. Every department in the entire hospital could not have encouraged and supported us more.

So what are the differences?

To be honest there are so many it is hard to summarise them all. But let me try!

We have a team of fantastic doctors who come to work during normal working hours and also on call at night and weekends.

We brought our wonderful team of dedicated nurses with us who have been joined by 5 new nurses from the MNH staff. All are working to make our two new wards the centres of excellence we have dreamed of.

We can get blood products when we need them – including for the first time in almost 4 years - platelets on the weekends!

The lab works 24/7 and has been incredibly supportive as they have prioritized all our children's samples.

We can also not order USS, CT (25E) and MRI(50E) scans.

We have clean fresh drinking water on all wards.

We have a large designated area to prepare and store the chemotherapy.

And many many more improvements – you might just have to visit to see them all for yourself.

And the result?.....

We have been at MNH 4 weeks already and I am sure that there are at least 4 children alive and well thanks to the move. Here are some of their stories.

Abdallah:

This handsome young man presented to the ward at MNH the day after we arrived which just happened to be bank holiday. His father carried him in as he was near unconscious and certainly close to death from overwhelming infection. He was one of our children we were

treating for leukaemia. I was called to see him but by the time I came to the ward the new intern doctor had already seen him and had started antibiotics, fluids and ordered blood as the blood tests they had rushed to the lab showed that he was severely anaemic. In situations such as this minutes can make all the difference – that intern most certainly saved his life. Staff on site is one of the new wonderful realities of care at MNH.



Doris:

This little girl has a retinoblastoma – cancer of the back of the eye. She has almost completed her treatment. However, shortly after moving to MNH she developed a bad tummy bug and had very severe diarrhoea and vomiting which led to a potassium level in her blood that almost killed her. She quickly fell unconscious and required oxygen, assisted ventilation and very close laboratory and clinical monitoring as we tried to correct her blood levels. Fortunately all these services were available at MNH and the following morning she was shouting for her breakfast!



Amadeus:

This little man has a huge personality and a terrible disease called Acute Myeloid Leukaemia. The treatment is extremely tough and very dangerous. For the first time ever we have been able to give Amadeus his own room, preventing him from mixing with all the routine bugs on the ward. Access to his room is strictly restricted and handwashing is stressed to all who approach him. We have also managed to do daily blood tests and give him blood products as soon as he needs them without delay.

As a result, so far (fingers and toes crossed!!), he has done extremely well and has received the third of his extremely toxic rounds of chemotherapy with fewer problems than all previous cycles. He is not out of the woods yet but the move has given him the best possible chance.



We still have much to do – after settling into the new ward we are almost immediately going to start building our new hostel, classroom and income generation facility (also on the hospital grounds). Continuing medical education of both nurses and doctors will then be the priority.

Thank you once again for all your support over the past few years. I hope you believe your contribution has in a very real way made this move finally happen. Without all the support nothing would have changed. I urge you to stick with us. We are not finished yet but we are pleased with where things are going.

I promise to keep you all posted.

Yours happily and hopefully,

Trish Scanlan (known locally as Dr Twishi. ☺), May 2011.