

## Med Student Handover Notes (Sep-Dec 2019)- Tim Robinson (4<sup>th</sup> year Flinders NTMP)

A few notes from my 3 month placement at Kompam:

### Weekly Rhythm

Weekdays start with a 15 min devotion (songs & prayer) in the upstairs conference room from 0745h which you are very welcome but not required to attend.

	AM (0800h-1200h)	PM 1300-1630h)
<b>Monday</b>	Ward rounds (Dr Mills + Team)	Ward Work
<b>Tuesday</b>	Surgery	Surgery
<b>Wednesday</b>	Ward Rounds (Team)	Dr William's Clinic
<b>Thursday</b>	Surgery	Surgery
<b>Friday</b>	Ward Rounds (Team)	Dr Mills' Clinic
<b>Saturday</b>	Free or help the oncall Dr	Dinner at the Mills' (1830h, bring food to share)
<b>Sunday</b>	Church 0930h (Baptist)	Free or help the oncall Dr

### Jobs:

As med student, this is an excellent place to learn and practice practical skills under some great teachers. Initial jobs will be doing the x-rays, helping pathology with bloods, maternal USS, drawing up drugs for anaesthetics, and then the normal jobs you'd do back home on surgical and medical placements. To be honest, I found the first week quite overwhelming, with the culture shock of developing country medicine (flies, hand hygiene, language barriers, noise, heat, mud etc). Look after yourself. Once you've settled in (you will!), there are a few (non-standard) med-student type jobs that can be done to improve patient outcomes (check with Dave/Rebecca first) without taking up too much time of the doctors. They are med student jobs as they are a bit fiddly/ time consuming, but still worthwhile to the patients if you have capacity. These are some I learnt, I expect you will also come up with your own ideas based on your specific interests and experiences back home. If you have an idea that can improve patient care within the resource constraints, don't be afraid to suggest it, then step up and own it.

### Cast Wedging

Indication: Long bone reduced with POP cast but poorly aligned on x-ray post casting

1. X-ray post POP casting and measure angle of long bone
2. Trigonometry to calculate size of wedge needed to correct long bone alignment
3. Analgesia for wedging (ask an RMO to supervise- I used 50mg Ketamine IV for adults)
4. Cut slit with plaster saw then create wedge (I used stacked tongue depressors)
5. Re-xray to confirm effect (generally <10 degrees is satisfactory, but check orthobullets.com to confirm)
6. Pack gap with ortho wool then apply POP over the top. The benefit of cast wedging is better alignment of the fracture and less waste of POP



### Negative Pressure Wound (Vacuum) Dressing

Indications: slow healing wound (diabetic foot ulcer, laparotomy by secondary intention etc)

Contraindications: Hb <10, wound near a major vessel, infected wound)

1. Sterilise sponge & suction tube (autoclave in CSSD- normally a days notice needed for the theatre nurses)
2. Next time COD (Change of dressing) is happening in theatre, debride & clean as per normal, but then pack with sponge, create seal with tegaderm (or glad wrap and tape if tegaderm is in short supply) then insert suction tube and test seal (approx. 100-125mm Hg is ideal for most wounds). Note: ensure all of the wound surface has contact with sponge, otherwise it will dry out and require further debridement. The suction machine should be kept on an intermittent setting so the motor doesn't burn out.
3. Monitor: Change dressing each 2-3 days.
4. The benefits of Vacuum dressings are quicker wound healing times, and 2-3 day dressing changes means less need for patient fasting if daily COD requires ketamine.



## Language

There are three main languages used at Kompiam (English, Tok Pisin (used by PNG Staff from outside Enga) and Tok Ples (the local language used by Engans). About half the patients understand Tok Pisin. You will pick up a few phrases in Tok Pisin after a few weeks, but Engan is less intuitive.

There are some good Tok Pisin Anki cards that can be downloaded if you want to practice

**Tok Pisin Medical Phrases** you will probably hear on ward rounds:

You got somepela askim?	Have you got any questions?
You tok nau	Tell me your story
You got tok pisin?	Can you speak Tok Pisin?
You got pain?	Are you in pain?
You pilim tarout?	Are you nauseous? (throw out)
You got skin hot/ skin i hot	Have you got a fever?
Pain em stap where	Where does it hurt?
Hamas moon/wik you got dispela problem?	How many months/weeks have you had this problem
You got sik mun?	Have you had your period?
You got hamas Christmas?	How old are you?
Pek pek	poo
Pis pis	urine
Bel mama	Pregnant lady
You drinkim dispela marasin	Take this medicine
Screw belong you, grease e pinis. Em driup now!	A favourite- explaining that 'You've got osteoarthritis in your knee'
Me no ken fixim dispela problem	We can't fix this problem
Dispela marasin kilem pain, em tas al	This medicine will alleviate pain, that's all
Me givem shoot marasin	I'll give you an injection
You kai kai oraight?	Are you eating OK?

## Engan

Good Morning	Yongam
Ok	Kabul

## Practicalities

**Internet.** In 2019 Digicel had a 6 GB for 85K per month which was sufficient. Best to but your prepaid at the airport. The market shops sell recharge but at a markup (5K credit for 6K).

My phone didn't initially pick up the network at Kompiam, changing the access point settings to internet.digicelpng.com solved the problem.

Also, the mobile reception unexpectedly disappears for up to 4 days at a time. So don't leave important admin til the last moment. Warn your parents/ family that this may occur. The hospital has a satellite link wifi for emergencies but the password is closely held. You could provide family the hospital's email address in advance for any urgent messages from home.

**Paying for accommodation.** There is an Australian bank account as well as a PNG account (easier to use for the Aussie students)

**EFTPOS.** If you run out of cash it is a pain. Some of the shops at the market have EFTPOS (but charge an extra 10% for withdrawal of cash) my VISA card didn't work at Kompiam, but the ATMs at Wabag did. There's normally a weekly car trip to Wabag. There's also daily (apart from Sundays) trip to Wabag by PMV (15K each way) for the public. I went along once but it wasn't ideal (from both convenience and safety perspective). If you do go to Wabag by PMV I'd recommend taking one of the well-connected local lads as a guide/ security. (Remsy & Junior) do a good job.

## **Food**

The Kompiam Market is held on Wednesdays and there will be a selection of seasonal veggies available (Sep-Dec were sweet potato, corn, greens, peanuts, pumpkin, pineapple, beans, sugar cane & bananas.) Best time to go is around lunch when the sellers will have walked in from their gardens. Prices seem to be standardised between sellers.

If you have time, try baking banana bread!

## **Recent History**

**Tribal fighting.** In 2017-18 there was a tribal conflict at Kompiam that resulted in about 45 killed. Essentially there was conflict between the tribe at the station and at the high school 5km up the road. Peace talks were held in late 2019 but there is still tensions that are often not perceived initially by the outsider. A lot of the locals won't be comfortable going outside their tribe's territory (this is a big deal when hospitalisation is needed). And means that remote patrols are a very important task for the hospital to provide healthcare to as many as possible. You may also see armed men (homemade shotguns & pistols) when you go out on patrol, and axes and bush knives carried locally. Don't be overly alarmed. There is a youtube clip called 'The Lost Rambos' which provides some further context. There was an ambush at the first bridge on the way to Wabag which is still very fresh in people's memories that you might hear of. Despite all this, the hospital and staff are held in high regard, and weren't targeted during the period of violence. My family & I walked around a lot by ourselves and were very well looked after, people overwhelmingly are grateful you are here and want to keep you safe/ comfortable. Just be aware of the recent history, accept advice about safety and show respect.

## **Ideas for weekends:**

Walks:

Aside from the river (Wara Sau), there are a few other walks that can be done (Check with Dave/Rebecca first though). Google maps is pretty good for GPS and route planning. Ask around for a guide/ escort if it makes you feel safer. Some I enjoyed are

1. Kalamanda . From the airstrip walk along the main road to Dr Ken's new house. Descend down to the river (Wara Sau) and cross a swing bridge before ascending to the Kalamanda village (3-4h return).
2. Mountain (Yalamanda?). Take the shortcut to Wara Sau at the back of the hospital, cross it then also the iron bridge (it's unserviceable so hang onto the handrail!). Ascend the spur line and you will have excellent views of the Hospital. At the top of the mountain (past the landslide) is a village called Paip with views of Mt Hagen and North over the Sepik province. Past this is a working goldmine. This is a big walk (10h return)
3. Kaindan. Walk towards the High School. There is a lovely swimming/ picnic spot along the way (3-4h return)



Picnic at second bridge

#### Making Coffee:

1. Buy green coffee beans at shop opposite market 3-4K per Kg.
2. Spread on an oven tray and roast (@ highest setting) until you hear the beans crack- a bit like popcorn. This is normally 10-15 min. stir the beans and leave for another 5 min. (the beans should be dark brown UNDER the husk). The husk shouldn't be charcoal! then turn off oven and let cool
3. Grind beans in blender
4. Enjoy! There is a plunger in the OT tea room. And experiment with different roasts

#### Fishing:

1. Line and hooks (buy the small ones) bought at the market, then cut some bamboo for a pole and dig some worms or use bits of flour dough balls for bait. The fish are plentiful albeit small and if fried taste better than the tin tuna. You won't have trouble finding one of the kids to show you how it's done. You can start a fire and roast some corn by the river as you fish.

#### Learning to Mumu

1. If you make friends with someone who knows how to Mumu, this is an interesting way to spend an afternoon but takes quite a few hours.
2. Chickens (Kakaruk) are 50K in the village, and firewood and sweet potatoes are cheaply available at the market.
3. Basically, you dig a hole, light a fire, heat some stones then prepare your chicken and potatoes before wrapping in banana leaves, roasting and enjoying some very unique flavours. There are different styles of mumu (wet & dry) with different tastes.



### Birdwatching

1. This part of Enga is poorly surveyed from an ornithological perspective, and there are lots of interesting sightings. I've left a set of binoculars in the student accommodation to be borrowed then passed on. A bird list for Kompiam valley is located at [here](#)



Blyth's Hornbill seen on patrol at Marambe