

# **KOMPIAM: A STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE**

## **Jacqueline Boyd, June 2005**

This is in addition to the information Dr Mills has written about doing a placement in Kompiam. Please feel free to add to this document - the more people that add to it, hopefully the more helpful it will be.

I think the best piece of advice for a placement such as this is to go in with an open mind and to get involved as much as you can. Each experience is unique, and I don't think you can ever 'prepare' yourself fully. Having said that, hearing of other people's experiences may give you an idea of what to expect.

### **Preparing to go**

#### What to take

- Anything that you'll need. You can't buy much in Kompiam.
- Comfortable clothes. Hospital clothes - t-shirt/shirt and shorts/pants ok for guys, loose tops and skirt/pants/<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> pants for girls. Sandals seemed to be ok around the hospital.
- Shoes to walk in that you don't mind being covered in mud (you may not be able to take them back into Australia, or customs will have to spray them)
- Camera - digital is best as everyone loves looking at their pictures
- Mozzie repellent and sunscreen
- Sleeping bag
- Umbrella and raincoat
- Torch
- Pen and notepad
- If you have soccer shoes bring them
- Make sure you have antimalarials

#### What to expect

Kompiam is very remote, but it does have some of the comforts. There is a generator for the hospital which runs for a few hours through the day and then from about 6.30 until 10 at night (unless the rugby is on!). Apart from that, the Mills's house has solar power which can be used at any time. They also have a tv (which can be watched for a couple of hours at night when the transmitter is turned on), video, dvd and hot water. So it's not exactly roughing it! Karina is a fantastic cook too, so don't expect to lose any weight while up there (rather the opposite!). The food is really what we're used to, except when you're out on patrols - then it's mainly sweet potato and greens.

### **How much money do I need?**

- Board is currently 40 Kina per night. (If you are staying in the student house then you need to add food to that.)
- Petrol one way ~K150 Kompam-Mt Hagen. May need to pay if the car is going just for you. Or you can fly ~K160. It's fun to go at least one way in the 4WD.
- Hotel and food in Mt Hagen. One night each way. Depends where you stay - leave K100 to 200 per night.
- There is very little in Kompam to spend money on. There are some shops selling coke and twisties for 1 or 2 Kina, and you are able to get a t-shirt which is ~ K16. There's really not much more to buy.
- Patrol - depends on where you go and how you get there. Going by foot or car you don't need any money, but if going by plane you need to pay your own way there. Maximum for a patrol airfare is K320 return, but remember it is up to you if you go or not.
- Phone - Dr Mills has a phone at his place (the only phone in Kompam). To receive incoming calls is cheaper than outgoing. Not sure of exact price, but between 0.75 and 3 Kina per min. Just keep a record of ingoing and outgoing calls and how long they were, and total it at the end.

### **What can I take to help?**

There are a few things that are always helpful in Kompam. There is no expectation that you bring anything with you, but if you feel you want to bring something, some of the following are options. You can also get in contact with Dr Mills (by email) and ask if there is anything specific at the time that is needed.

Always useful are:

Surgical gloves (sizes 7, 7.5, 8)

Griseofulvin

Povidone iodine

Crepe bandages

## What is there to do?

There are plenty of things to do in Kompam - you just have to know where to look.

- *Ward rounds* - Mon, Wed and Fri mornings. When all the inpatients are formally seen. Kompam hospital is currently 35 beds and usually full. ICU patients are seen everyday, and patients are also seen by the doctor as needed.
- *Elective surgery* - Tues and Thurs. This is flexible depending on the load - sometimes there is no surgery, or surgery may happen on other days.
- *Emergency surgery* happens whenever it is needed.
- *Clinics* - Dr Taiye's is on Mon afternoon, Dr Mills's on Fri afternoon. There are usually some interesting cases to see. Patients are referred to these clinics by outpatients.
- *Journal club/presentations* - Wed and Fri mornings. Depending on what patients you have seen, you may be asked to look up something and present it to the two doctors and the other medical student if there is one. It's informal and nothing to get too worried about.
- *Radiology* - When you get a chance go to radiology and learn how to take an x-ray and develop it.
- *Outpatients* - People needing medical help usually present first to outpatients. They are open Mon to Fri all day. It is run by nurses and community health workers, who treat basic illnesses such as malaria, pneumonias, etc. A doctor will be called if needed, or referred for the doctors clinic. It's good to spend a little time there to get an idea of common presentations for medical treatment in Kompam.
- *MCH* - Maternal and Child Health. Nurses and community health workers weigh and immunise children, give advice on contraception and do antenatal checkups. Again a good place to have a look at and see how things are done.
- *Deliveries* - If you are interested in seeing a delivery, then let Mildred (head ward nurse) know, and ask the nurses to call you. Putting up a sign might be helpful too.
- *Pathology* - There is plenty to do in here - from watching a crossmatch to doing malaria smears. Gram stains, ZN stains and malaria smears are all things you can learn how to do, and anything else that's being done. Just ask Simon, and when he has a chance he will take you through malaria and TB slides. It's a good idea to follow a pathology specimen through, eg if you take a knee aspirate, then go to the lab and see what happens to it.
- *Study* - I know it's an awful word, but there's usually plenty to look up as there are lots of things we're not used to seeing in Adelaide. Dr Mills has a great library in his office, so just ask to borrow books whenever you need them. There's also a stack of books in the student's room. In the student's room there is also a suture board - well worth practicing them, as it will come in useful in surgery. Dr Mills also has some great CDs on heart sounds and TB which are well worth a look. Just ask him about them.
- *Patrols* - There are patrols going all the time, and in a month you should get the opportunity to go on at least one. Just ask Dr Mills when you'll get the opportunity to go. You get there by either walking, driving or plane, and usually stay there for one or two nights. Often this is in a grass hut and you have to rough it, but it's great fun. Whilst there you run a clinic with the doctor, and if there are sick patients, you may

end up taking some back with you. If you're not a fan of sweet potato, bring along some extra food!

- *MCH walks* - These happen often, you just have to ask when over at MCH. Usually they are just for a day. They do the same type of things as the MCH clinic.

Sometimes there are also longer vaccination walks.

And remember you're there to enjoy yourself - if you feel you need some time to yourself or an afternoon off, just ask. And make sure you have a look at the surrounds.

### **What is there to do around Kompam?**

Weekends are very quiet around Kompam, so here are a few things that kept us occupied.

- Soccer is great fun, even if you're not particularly talented. People do take their soccer quite seriously, and there are 9 teams in Kompam - 4 girls and 5 guys. 2 of these are 'Medics'. Games are on Saturdays and there is training through the week.
- Walks around the station – Don't feel afraid to head outside the hospital and have a look around Kompam. There should be a very rough map attached to this, and use it as a rough guide.
- Longer walks - There are a few walks you can do around Kompam. It may be best to go with someone who knows Kompam well. You can walk along the Mt Hagen road for ~20min to get to the river, or if you take the other road out of town you can head up to the Baptist mission (30mins) or the high school (about 1hr). Both are nice walks and worth going on.
- Market day is Wednesday, and it's definitely worth going to check it out. Just be prepared to be the centre of attention.

## Who is everyone?

People in Enga are very friendly, and you find that you are constantly saying ‘apinun’ (afternoon) to anyone you pass in the street.

There is quite a large number of staff at the hospital, and I’ve tried to get together a list of people’s names. People with a star in front of their name are in charge of that department. This is not complete - feel free to add to and change it.

### Doctors

Dr David Mills

Dr Taiye

### Ward nurses/community health workers

\*Mildred David

Ellen Ness

Lehan Janet

(there are about 16 people)

### Theatre nurses

Veronica Nancy

Linda Jenny

### Outpatients

Johnson Rosemary

Peter Iso

Robert

### MCH

\*Nancy Rachael

Nella Nixon

### Security

Paul Kemavali

Ipo Laolao

### Cleaners

Paul

Lucy

Painam

### Matron

Jerry

### Pathology

Simon Pilga

### Dispensary/Radiology

TBA

### Buisness Office

Kevin

Joseph

### Treasurer (looks after insurance)

John

### Chaplain

Jackson

### Cook

Thomas

### Canteen Keeper

Mr Mark

### Drivers

Simon

Kyakae

Man

### Carpenters

Minan

Minor

### **Cultural issues**

Many people are curious as to who you are and where you are from. For this reason, people look and stare at you at times, particularly when you are in the marketplace. It is out of curiosity and not meant to make you feel uncomfortable.

I also found that people laughed at me - again not meant in a nasty way, but is a little strange at first.

Violence is reasonably prevalent, and the results of the violence are often seen at Kompiam hospital. It is mainly from tribal fights and domestic violence. Be prepared to see bush knife wounds, cut tendons, etc. Also just be aware that most men around Kompiam carry bush knives or axes.

### **Religion**

Christianity is a very important and large part of life in Kompiam and the hospital is run by the Baptist Union. I found that one of the first questions many people asked me what denomination I was.

Not being from a particularly religious background I found it a little different in Kompiam. There are little things each day that you notice, like praying with a patient before surgery, listening to Christian music in theatre and stopping to pray along the way when going on long walks. Many people go to church on Sundays, and there are other services through the week also. I found that out in the villages most of the songs people sung and the people who came to talk to them were of religious backgrounds.

You are welcome to attend services, but it is by no means something you are expected to do. At no time did I feel that religion was being forced upon me.

I found that in Kompiam I really enjoyed attending church services and learning the Pidgin words to songs. Having said that, don't feel intimidated by it - it's really about recognising and respecting how big the part is that religion plays in the daily lives of people in Kompiam.

### **Other useful things to know**

There is a room for students at the hospital. Dr Mills will give you the key. There are a number of books and a suture board in there to practice on.

Being flexible is quite important in Kompiam - you never quite know what will happen, and things can change all the time. Just go with the flow.

Everyone is very approachable, so if you have a question – just ask.

### Language: Helpful Pidgin words and phrases

Nurses and community health workers usually speak English. Some of the other staff will also, but majority of patients will not. Many of the staff and some people in Kompam speak pidgin. Engan is the local language, and all people who are originally from Kompam and the surrounds will speak Engan.

Some staff in the hospital (as many are from other areas) do not speak Engan, and will communicate with patients in either Pidgin, or will get someone to translate.

Most people are happy to help you out and translate Engan or Pidgin into English - just ask. Having said that, it's good to give Pidgin a go, so here are a few words and phrases you may hear and may be useful.

Hello	Gude
Good morning	Good moning
Good afternoon	Apinun
How are you?	Yu stap gut?
I am fine	Me stap gut
See you later	Lakim you bihain
Goodbye	Gutbai/lukim yu
Please	Plis
Excuse me	Sori
Thankyou very much	Tenkyu tru
Do you speak English/Pidgin?	Yu save tok Inglis/Pisin?
I don't understand	Mi no save/Mi no klia gut
What is your name?	Wanem nem bilong yu?
My name is...	Nem bilong mi...
Where do you come from?	Yu bilong wanem hap?
I am from Australia	Ples bilong mi ostrelya
How old are you?	Hamas krismas bilong yu?
What is your job?	Wanim kain wok bilong yu?
I am a teacher/doctor/student	Mi tisa/dokta/sumatin
What time is it?	Wanem taim nau?
It is 5 O'clock	Emi I faiv kilok
How much is it?	Hamas long em?

I/me  
You  
He/she/it/him/her  
We/us  
They/them

Who/whom  
Whose  
What  
Which  
How many/how much?  
Where  
Why  
How

Yes  
No

#### NUMBERS

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
20  
30  
100

Man  
Woman  
Children

Food  
Drink  
Water  
Milk  
Sweet potato

Mi  
Yu  
Em  
Yumi/mipela  
Ol

Husat  
Bilong husat  
Wanem  
Husat/wanem  
Hamas?  
We  
Bilong wanem  
Olsem wanem

Yes  
Nogat

Wan  
Tu  
Tri  
Foa  
Faiv  
Sikis  
Seven  
Et  
Nain  
Ten  
Wanpela ten wan  
Wanpela ten tu, etc  
Tupela ten  
Tripela ten, etc  
Wan handet

Man  
Meri  
Pikinini

Kaikai  
Dring  
Wara  
Susu  
Kaukau



Small	Liklik
Strong	Strongpela
Good	Gutpela
Big	Bik
Hospital	Haus sik
Doctor	Dokta
Medicine	Marasin
Tablet	Tablet
Bandage	Banis
Pain	Pen
Sore	Sue
Blood	Blut
Faeces	Pekpek
Urine	pispis
I have a sore...	Mi gat sue...
Stomachache	Bel i pen
Headache	Het i pen
Diarrhoea	Pek pek wara
Dizzy	Ai i raun
Fever	Fiva
Head	Het
Hair	Gras
Ear	Ia
Eye	Ai
Nose	Nus
Mouth	Mus
Arm/hand	Han
Leg/foot	Lek

Enjoy your time in Kompaim, and please feel free to add to this document.