



New triage system launched at Mt Hagen Hospital

A new triage and patient flow system in the Emergency Department at Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital (MHPH) was launched on Friday, 25th October 2019.

The system is designed to help identify patients with urgent healthcare needs so that they can be prioritised for assessment and treatment.

The new system has been developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in collaboration with Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and has been adapted for Papua New Guinea by the Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM) based in Melbourne.

Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital is implementing the new system for the first time in the world and will assess its effectiveness in a research project involving the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority, ACEM and WHO. It is being funded by ACEM and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Before the launching of the new system last week, staff of the Emergency Department were put through two days of intensive training on among other areas, how to identify and assess patients and categorise them into the three different categories for treatment.

Australian Emergency Physicians, Dr Colin Banks and Dr Rob Mitchell, accompanied by four nurses – Tracie Ham, Sarah Bornstein, Travis Cole and JP Miller were in Mt Hagen last week to conduct the training and help set up the new system at the hospital.

Specialist Medical Officer in Emergency Medicine at MHPH, Dr John Junior McKup said the new system would help improve the quality of care provided to emergency patients because it would allow clinicians to identify patients who need urgent treatment.

Triaging is aimed at identifying which patients are the most urgent in need of treatment and those who are less urgent. The system has three categories or colour-codes so clinicians know which patients must be seen first.

When patients present themselves at the Emergency Department, they are identified and grouped into these categories or colours – red category for patients to be seen immediately within 5 minutes, yellow category for urgent patients to be seen within 15 minutes and green category for non-urgent ones.

"All patients who attend MHPH Emergency Department will now be registered and triaged on arrival. Under the new system, emergency doctors will see patients in order of urgency, not time of arrival", Dr McKup said.

Dr Colin Banks who is the Chair of the ACEM Global Emergency Care Committee said the system was an exciting new development for Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital and he was delighted to be back at the hospital to see first-hand how Dr McKup and his team were working to improve care for emergency patients in Western Highlands.

"Implementing the new system has been a collaborative project between emergency

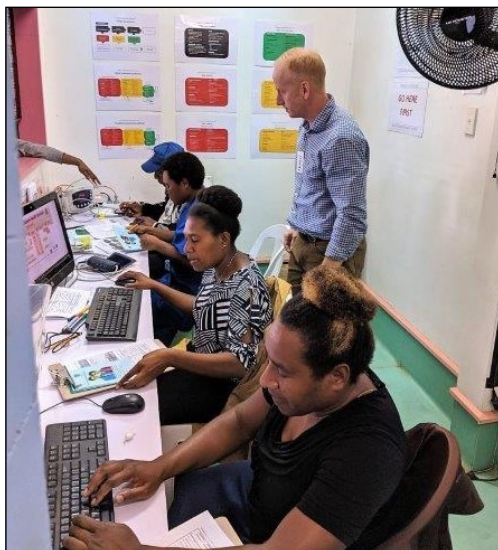


Above - The clinicians displaying their certificates after completing their training and below right, they are pictured in a training session.

physicians and nurses from Australia and PNG, and it's been a very positive experience for all involved", he said.

The implementation of the new system is part of an emergency care strengthening project supported by the Australian Government through the PNGAus Partnership. It was piloted at Gerehu General Hospital in Port Moresby in September this year, yielding immediate improvement to patient management and care and the same level of impact is anticipated at Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital.

The use of computers helps clinicians to identify and prioritise treatment for different categories of patients.



In this issue:

Page

New triage system launched at Mt Hagen Hospital	1
YWAM team helps restore eye sights of many people	2
Medical supply management for rural health facilities	2
PHAs and Hospitals urged to establish family support centres	3
District blessed with more Village Health Volunteers	3
Highlands PHA Chairs and CEOs discuss regional issues	4
DPM Audit Team commences audit of WHPHA operations	4

YWAM team helps restore eye sights of many people

Many partially or completely blind people in the Western Highlands and neighbouring provinces are now able to see again, thanks to the visiting Youth With A Mission (YWAM) team from Hawaii.

An eye specialist and two nurses from YWAM assisted by the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority's ophthalmology team led by its eye specialist, Dr Waimbe Wahamu have created miracles following successful surgery for many who could not previously see.

The visiting YWAM team spent ten days in Mt Hagen recently and with the help of the WHPHA team, operated on a total of 113 cases, all of them successful with the patients returning home

feeling well and happy with their sight restored.

According to Dr Wahamu, it took nine days for the surgical team to operate on the patients where 98 of them had cataracts removed while 14 of them were operated on for Pterygiums and one for Band keratopathy.

He said a majority of the patients were from Western Highlands and those operated on were mostly older people who were either partially or completely blind.

Dr Wahamu said he was happy for the visiting YWAM team who had helped to reduce a backlog of eye surgeries that had been waiting to be done and thanked them for their kind gesture.

He has also thanked his own team as well as other WHPHA staff such as doctors, nurses, theatre and support staff who had helped in one way or another to make the surgical operation a great success.

"I would like to sincerely thank each and every one of you for your understanding and support in making this eye surgical operation a great success.

"It is a testimony of how team work can achieve much for our patients who seek our care. Our friends from YWAM have really enjoyed their stay and have been a great blessing to us all.

"Together we have operated 113 cases in nine days of surgery and our patients are all well and have gone home with their sight restored. They will live to tell their story so keep up the great team spirit", Dr Wahamu said.

Chief Executive Officer of the WHPHA, Mr David Vorst said management was very proud of



Above - A patient is being operated on while pictured left are those already operated on recovering in the surgical ward.

the great team effort that had been put in by all concerned to make our patients happy and thanked them including the YWAM team for a great effort.

MEDICAL SUPPLY MANAGEMENT FOR RURAL HEALTH FACILITIES



The clinicians with their certificates pose for a picture with Dr Titi and Dr Ripa

Clinicians from rural health facilities in the Western Highlands now have a better understanding of how to order medical consumables and drugs from the Highlands regional Area Medical Stores (AMS) in Mt Hagen.

This follows their attendance of a week-long training course on Medical Supply Management and Procurement, conducted jointly by AMS and the United Nations Family Planning Association (UNFPA) which funded it.

It was conducted in Mt Hagen in August and attended by selected clinicians from both rural and urban health facilities, owned and operated by the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority, Churches and Non-Government

had been very eventful.

She said the participants had actively participated in questions and answers sessions as well as in other discussions and she was sure they were fully equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to go back and do their supply ordering more effectively.

Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority's Director for Clinical Excellence, Training and Research, Dr Paulus Ripa when closing the workshop thanked UNFPA for facilitating and funding the training.

Dr Ripa said in the absence of pharmacists in the rural facilities, these clinicians needed such training and he also thanked the National

Organisations (NGOs).

The training was basically to upskill the clinicians on the best methods of ordering drugs and how to properly manage their use at their respective facilities.

Dr Titi of UNFPA who led the training team thanked the participants for making themselves available and added that the week-long training

Department of Health and AMS for organising such an important training workshop.

He told the trainers, particularly UNFPA that he was sure the clinicians were happy to learn and acquire such new skills to help them in ordering and managing their drug supplies and he thanked the participants for actively participating in the training.

"Procurement is a problem but those of us who order drugs must be responsible for how we order, manage and use them in our respective facilities", he told the participants.

He further told them that they all came from health facilities that were operated by different organisations including churches and NGOs and the WHPHA would issue a catalogue for their respective facilities on what they could order from the Area Medical Store.

He added that with no pharmacists in the rural facilities, these clinicians had done well and the training would further enhance their knowledge and skills on how and what they needed to order to meet the needs of their patients.



Dr Titi (left) presenting a present to Dr Ripa

PHAs and Hospitals urged to establish Family Support Centres

Provincial Health Authorities and hospitals in the Highlands region have been urged to establish Family Support Centres (FSCs) as part of their establishments to deal with victims and survivors of sexual violence.

A week-long workshop for trainers and counsellors of Gender Based Violence victims was told in Mt Hagen recently that due to the lack of such facilities, many victims of sexual violence and abuse could not be treated and counselled, resulting in them being left to suffer life-long health conditions.

The workshop was further told that whilst hospitals had family support centres to deal with victims who visited them, many others in the rural areas suffered silently due to the lack of such facilities.

And it was agreed that all PHAs and hospitals in the region should include family support centres as part of their organisational structures and set up such centres in the districts as well to deal with victims of gender based violence and abuse.

The workshop was attended by more than 30 senior clinicians from the seven Highlands provinces, many of them trainers and counsellors on gender based violence. It was sponsored by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and facilitated by the National Department of Health.

A representative of WHO said her organisation was keen to support efforts to deal with sexual violence and urged PHAs and hospitals to set up family support centres as specialised units to



Some of the participants pose for a group picture after the workshop with Dr Dat standing second from left.

deal with the victims and survivors.

She said FSCs were needed in the districts to help victims from the rural areas and further urged PHAs and hospitals to put them on their Annual Implementation Programs (AIPs) each year to build and assist all victims of sexual violence.

Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority's Director for Population Health, Dr Maddison Dat when closing the workshop thanked WHO and NDoH for funding and conducting the training.

He said he was happy to see many clinicians attending the training because there was a

general breakdown in civil control in PNG where everyone did what they wanted to do without having any due care for others and the clinicians needed to be fully equipped with the necessary skills to deal with victims and survivors of violent crimes.

"Gender based violence is a big issue given the environment we live in and the different attitudes of the people and all stakeholders including church health services and NGOs need to work together with the hospitals to address this", he said.

District blessed with more Village Health Volunteers



The third batch of Village Health Volunteers pose for a picture with their trainers after their graduation

Tambul/Nebilyer District in Western Highlands is blessed with more Village Health Volunteers (VHV) to provide professional help to pregnant mothers in their villages to deliver safely.

This follows the graduation of 18 women on Friday, 6th September 2019, after completing four weeks of intensive training on how to help expecting mothers when they go into labour and later take them to the nearest health facility to deliver.

The graduation followed another two in January and May this year where a total of 38 village health volunteers from the district had graduated, bringing the grand total to 56 VHVs to work in the district.

As part of its ongoing efforts to help reduce

child mortality in the country, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has funded all the three trainings.

Clinical trainers from the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority conducted all the three trainings at the Mt Hagen Hospital campus where the women had been accommodated, fed and trained in both theory and practical skills.

The practical sessions included among others, visits to the labour ward's early essential new born care section, special care nursery, maternal and child health clinic and family planning.

A Senior Medical Officer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Mt Hagen Hospital, Dr Joseph Kuk told the graduating women that their work would not be effective without the support of their husbands and fathers.

He also urged facility OICs, ward councillors, presidents, the district CEO and other community leaders to support the VHVs to do their work effectively.

"We need to work in partnership in order to help our pregnant mothers to deliver safely. I thank all you husbands and fathers who are here today to witness your wives graduate for allowing them to leave home for four weeks to undergo this training", he said.

He said the graduates must remember that their job was to help bring expecting mothers to the nearest health facilities to deliver and not for them to help deliver.

He also thanked the WHPHA management and UNICEF for making the training possible and conducting it to help save mothers and new born babies.

Acting Chief Executive Officer, Sr. Janet Yamu said training of VHVs was an important program because many lives had been lost in the past and these women would now use their newly-acquired skills to help reduce the number of deaths in mothers and children.

She said the work of VHVs was a voluntary job and thanked all the women who had put up their hands to be trained to help other mothers and new born babies.

"Child mortality is very high in PNG compared to other countries in the Pacific and expecting mothers must cooperate with the village health volunteers and midwives who will be their partners for life to help deliver safely", she said.

The participants said they were thankful for the training they had received which had equipped them with new knowledge to help mothers deliver safely.

They were also presented with certificates as well as handbags, wool caps, jackets, gum boots, umbrellas, solar lights/torches and CUG mobile phones to help them carry out their work effectively.

Highlands PHA Chairs and CEOs Discuss Regional Issues



The Highlands PHA Chairpersons and CEOs during their inaugural meeting.

Provincial Health Authority Chairpersons and Chief Executive Officers from the Highlands Region met for the first time in Mt Hagen recently to discuss health issues affecting the region.

The two-day meeting which was hosted by the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) and funded by the Oil Search Foundation (OSF) was held at the Highlander Hotel from 20th - 21st August 2019.

Chairman of the WHPHA, Mr David Guinn in welcoming the participants said there were many health issues faced by the country that needed

Highlands, a regional IT program and an update on legal issues affecting the legislative framework within which health services were delivered.

Mr Guinn said the issue of shortage of drugs and medical consumables was faced by all health institutions across the country and the forum needed to come up with some constructive ideas as to how it can be addressed.

The Chief Executive Officer of WHPHA, Mr David Vorst echoed similar sentiments and suggested that the meeting prepare a paper on

urgent attention and regional forums such as this were good avenues to discuss them.

He said there were a number of regional issues on the agenda for discussion including the issue of drugs and consumables,

a regional care plan for the plan for the

the drugs issue as a regional body and submit it to the Health Minister, seeking his approval to order drugs directly from overseas suppliers.

He said when the Prime Minister's Audit team visited the WHPHA early this year, his management team had proposed the Chennai model to create an authority to deal with and procure drugs directly from overseas (India) and the Health Minister had agreed to the idea and had given his approval.

"We have told the National Department of Health and the Health Minister about our proposal to purchase drugs directly from overseas and they have given us approval to order what we want and where as long as we have the money.

"Therefore we propose that we prepare a regional procurement plan and submit it to the Minister as a regional body to procure drugs for our hospitals instead of waiting for Borneo to do it for us", Mr Vorst said.

He also told the meeting that Mt Hagen Hospital being the regional referral hospital was admitting many patients from throughout the region. He said 20% of adult admissions and 30% of paediatric admissions come from outside the WHP and this was putting significant pressure on already scarce resources.

Mr Guinn said that under a regional care plan, referral systems would be in place to improve clinical care and strengthen clinical governance and utilise the small number of Senior Medical Officers across the region to benefit everyone through improved patient care and skills upgrading of more junior doctors.

DPM Audit Team commences audit of WHPHA operations

An Audit team appointed by the Minister for Public Service, Hon Westley Nukundj to look into the manpower and staffing, organisational structure and payroll of the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) has commenced work this week.

The team of six senior officers from the Department of Personnel Management led by Deputy Secretary for Compliance, Assessment, Monitoring & Reporting and Corporate Affairs, Agnes Friday arrived on Wednesday and was welcomed and briefed by the Chief Executive Officer of the WHPHA, Mr David Vorst.

The team then met with the Senior Executive Management of the WHPHA the next morning where Mrs Friday introduced her team and explained why they were in Mt Hagen and what they would do.

Mrs Friday said the audit was a directive from the Prime Minister, James Marape which Minister Nukundj was implementing as part of a revamp of the public service to ensure the right number of public servants were employed under the approved structures of each department and organisation.

She said the National Executive Council had made a decision on 30th March 2017, directing the OSPEAC to coordinate necessary cost-saving measures including among others, freezing all non-essential recruitment by variation to the instruments of devolution and freezing all non-essential vacant positions in all Government Agencies.

The Minister for Public Service was directed by the Prime Minister to urgently commence work on the manpower, organisational and payroll audits in the Public Service and was assigned five Key Result Areas (KRAs) to achieve during the term of this Government, she said.

As a result he had directed DPM to start

implementing the five KRAs which included achieving quality workforce planning, reforming and modernising the public service, creating smarter and leaner public service organisational structures and removing duplication, promoting practical and targeted training for public servants and providing targeted training.

Mrs Friday said Minister Nukundj had identified four agencies which DPM would initially undertake the audit and these included the Department of Works, Hela Provincial Administration, Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority and the National Agriculture Quarantine and Inspection Authority (NAQIA).

She said her team whilst with the WHPHA would conduct an onsite audit of the manpower/staffing to determine the extent of abuse, if any, or non-compliance resulting in discrepancies in the names and total number of employees on both the payroll information and personnel records.

She added that the audit would also determine and identify among others, duplications and overlaps in functions and recommend appropriate corrective measures; determine and identify non-essential functions of the organisation and recommend remedial steps to fix the problem; identify non-essential positions



The DPM audit team poses for a group picture with members of the WHPHA senior executive management team. Mrs Friday and Mr Vorst are pictured standing front row 2nd and 3rd from right respectively.

within the organisation and recommend for possible abolition; and identify officers who have reached compulsory retirement age, normal retirement age and retirement on medical grounds.

There are nine Terms of Reference (ToR) for the audit team to carry out including visiting all WHPHA establishments throughout the province to conduct the required audit as well as to take photographs of all occupants of funded positions.

At the conclusion of the audit, the team will present its findings in a final report to the Public Service Minister with recommendations for appropriate measures to address problems and issues identified during the conduct of the audit.

The team will spend three weeks in the province to carry out and complete its tasks.