

From the Course Coordinator

The 15th Intermed Summer School ended on Thursday 2nd February 2012. We had 21 participants for the first three weeks, 14 of whom stayed for the 4th week, along with a participant from the 2011 Summer School who was not able to do the 4th week that year.

Every Intermed school brings together a unique group of individuals, each with their own amazing stories of God's leading into medical mission. This group was no exception, comprising 10 Registered Nurses, 4 nurse/midwives, 3 doctors and an occupational therapist, final year medical student, nutritionist and medical administrator.

We were very excited that two of this group were Indonesian nationals and had been sponsored by their Christian health mission group to attend Intermed 2012 (one of the founders of this mission group had previously done Intermed!).

Eighteen of these 21 participants had some previous cross-cultural mission experience, some short term and others longer term. Eight were definitely going to work cross-culturally in 2012 with another 7 probably going into such work.

Once again we are very grateful to the team of helpers, led by Michaela Wauchope, who provided excellent support to the teaching team. Joanne Isaacson again did a fantastic job in arranging accommodation (and transport) for many of the group – including an overnight River Murray cruise!

We are also blessed by the wonderful group of lecturers and facilitators who give of their time, knowledge and experience to share with us all. This year we were able to introduce a few new presenters as part of our "sustainability strategy" to have alternate presenters for as many presentations as possible.

This year we also introduced discussion on non-communicable disease in developing contexts (which now contributes a greater burden of disease than communicable diseases) and a seminar on the public health impacts of climate change.

One third of the sessions were formally evaluated by the participants – and all, without exception, "scored" 5 or more for content, presentation style and relevance – with many scoring close to the "perfect" 7 in these areas! The overall evaluation of the 3 week course was very encouraging.

Have you considered becoming a member?

"...amazing stories of God's leading into medical mission."

“Intermed has been a very inspiring and memorable time.”

Coming soon:

Graduate Diploma in International Health and Development

Apart from the many positive comments about knowledge and skills gained in clinical and public health, some encouraging comments about what else was gained included...

- Enrichment through meeting inspirational people – both lecturers and peers.
- Much greater respect for open-minded Christians who accept and don't judge others who may not live or worship in the same way ... will be recommending the course to many others.

Among the many “compliments” were:

- A great course, very informative, educational and personalized, amazing life experiences of lecturers and guest speakers. Really appreciate the time and effort put into making this course so good. Needs to be much more recognized in health and education circles.
- Thank you for a marathon effort providing information via speakers and reading material and coordinating everything. Intermed has been a very inspiring and memorable time – an experience I will certainly be sharing with others to encourage them to come.
- This has been a wonderfully enriching experience for me and I am so very grateful to you. The teaching has been inspirational and I feel so blessed to have participated in this course – thank you so much for sharing so many aspects of your lives – knowledge, experiences and opinions. I feel much better equipped for the years ahead on the mission field.

There were a few complaints, actually very few, with the most memorable worth quoting in full...

- I ate too much chocolate! Constant grazing – pH in mouth 5.5 – increased acidity – caries risk (Dr Kibble – who gave the lecture on “Where there is no dentist”!).

In Christ

Doug Shaw, Course Coordinator

From the Course Advisor

New Venture – at last!

When the early Intermed Practicum teams of 2007 and 2008 visited Vanuatu we noticed the tremendous work being done by nurses and nurse practitioners in their roles as Officers in Charge and as support staff in rural and isolated health centres and hospitals. However they had little support in terms of regular supportive supervision and continuing education (See Axioms of Health Care) which strongly equates with capacity.

“... a wonderfully enriching experience”

It was decided to offer a 1-week CME (continuing medical education) refresher programme with the provincial health office and with Camp Shining Light as the co-ordinators, and hopefully supported from the Australian Embassy in Port Vila and/or AusAID. Unfortunately neither the financial support was forthcoming, nor was Camp Shining Light able at that time to provide the leadership required.

Dr Shan Ong (a paediatrician and from INTERMED 2008) has established his own NGO and has been making several trips to Vanuatu over the past three years, working especially with disabled children associated with Camp Shining Light. In recent conversations with Pastor Jeremy Pinero, the hospital and provincial health staff it now seems not only possible but is all but certain (if even anything in the Pacific can be certain!) that Shan and I will conduct a 1-week programme in mid-June in Luganville on Espirito Santo.

The focus will be paediatrics concentrating on issues such as examining a child, evaluating a child presenting with fever and some surgical skills such as repair of laceration and opening abscesses, management of post-partum haemorrhage.

Anthony Radford



Practicum Report- Team Leader Kate Boon, RN/RM

This year the Intermed Practicum went to East Timor for 2 weeks. The team consisted of 10 members. The leadership included the regulars - Dr Sace Buma and Dr Sneha Kirubakaran.

“The teaching really gave us a good grounding for the time we were there.”

It was my first time leading a team but my third practicum. It was great to be under Sneha's wing in learning the intricacies of the pre organising, to the running of the practicum once we were in Timor. It was a wonderful experience and one that I was very grateful to have.

First time practicum members were Tibor, a doctor from SA, Cassie, an Enrolled Nurse from country NSW, Carly, an OT from Qld, Jeanette, an RN from NSW, and Tina, an RN from NSW. Repeat Practicum participants were Lorraine, an RN from northern Qld and Annette, an RN from Wagga.

“They're showing his love in practical ways...”


The practicum took place in two locations in East Timor, Hera – a ¾ hour drive out of Dili, located on the north coast – and Weberek, a 7-8 hour drive from Dili located near the South Coast.

In Hera our hosts were Nurse Branca, Soraya & Carol (both long term Brazilian Missionaries) and Carol (Kiwi Missionary). In Weberek our host was Anne, a Norwegian nurse working with YWAM. Anne had also attended Intermed Summer School.

It was great to have Sace and Sneha giving us teaching on the first day in East Timor. The teaching really gave us a good grounding for the time we were there. The teaching included basic assessment skills, how to structure your consultation, abdominal palpations and listening to chest sounds. It was great to be reminded of these things prior to starting our clinics.

One of the memorable lessons was about how it is God's work we are doing there and whatever we do, God will use us and work through us, despite us! It helped to take the pressure off when consulting – that we just need to be obedient and open to God's wisdom.

We specifically had arranged to have the village health assessment early in the practicum. This was so that we were able to get to know the people in the community prior to starting the clinic. From the Community assessment we could hypothesise on health problems we were likely to encounter.



The clinics were a great way to learn how to diagnose and treat a health problem. The main complaints we saw in Timor were respiratory and musculoskeletal problems. We also saw cases of Malaria and TB. Twice in the second week we opportunistically had suturing to attend to.

Another part of the Practicum is to experience Government Hospitals as well as Non-Government Organisations, and to gain a cross-cultural understanding. We visited Dr Dan's clinic, which is always a place of encouragement and wonder! How one man runs that place is incredible. We were also able to visit the Alola foundation that runs support programs for the women and children of Timor.

The last NGO in Timor we visited was the hospital for malnourished babies in the western end of Dili, "Hiam Health". This was a valuable experience as the team got to see and examine severely malnourished infants, and understand first-hand some of the issues that contribute to the problem of malnutrition in rural East Timor.

*Have you
considered
becoming a
member?*

A visit to the museum of East Timor's recent history and independence struggle "Chegal!" is also a must do when in Dili. This was a very moving experience, and well worth doing as it provided a good background for understanding the current plight and issues facing the East Timorese.

In the second week we had made a 4wd trek over the mountains to Weberek. This was such a wonderful experience for us all. It took approximately 8 hours to travel 250kms! This was such a fabulous way to see the country.

We spent 3 days in Weberek with Anne Berit and consulted at her clinics. Personally my favourite clinic was one where we turned up unannounced and with the help of our interpreters told the village elder we were nurses and doctors and would they like to bring us their sick?

There was a welcomed response and they quickly set about getting chairs and tables for us to use. It was a good time spent with the villagers where we were able to play with their beautiful children and have a laugh.

Anne, Branca, Soraya and Carol are all inspiring women that are doing wonderful work through Christ. They're showing his love in practical ways, from teaching the disabled, to enabling a community to have clean water and toilets, to running bible studies and building up leaders in their church.

Through the practicum we were able to gain an understanding of what it looks like to be a fulltime Missionary – not just running health clinics, but getting involved in the community and encouraging them in their faith. †

A Student's Perspective: Bairbre Ward

What do a bunch of nurses, midwives, doctors, an occupational therapist, a nutritionist and a clinic manager have in common? We all gathered in Adelaide in January for a summer school in International Health and Development, run by Intermed. (An easy way of describing it would be to call it a "Medical Missions summer school", but I'm not sure if that fully explains it!)

We came from all over Australia and further afield to take part in this 4 week intensive programme and it was BRILLIANT! We were blessed by talented and highly qualified speakers, many of whom had worked in missions themselves. Their ability to translate their area of expertise into practical tools we can use when we're "in the field" was very helpful.

There were topics on Global health and disease patterns. We looked at specific topics such as worms, maternal health and life in a refugee camp as well as the "big killers" HIV & AIDS, diarrhoea and respiratory illnesses to name just a few. Stories were shared about cross cultural life and God's heart for the nations was clearly evident.

"This course is invaluable... I would recommend [it] to any medical professional out there."

We got plastered one afternoon...though no alcohol was involved...We had a hands on session on how to put on plaster casts! We learned some basic suture techniques on some very willing volunteers-ok- it was just some pig feet, but it was pretty close to the real thing! We lanced abscesses, excised lesions and generally had a wonderful time.

Toward the end of the course we had a practical session called "Dentistry for non-dentists". We had the chance to fill nasty cavity filled teeth also to pull other teeth out! Once more, there was not a real patient in sight, just some skulls and plenty of teeth. I definitely wanted to brush my teeth more after THAT session.

Group work played a big part in the course too. Literature reviews and health promotion case studies were the order of the day...complete with a little drama to show our teaching strategy.

Throughout this course I was challenged, encouraged and equipped in my role a nurse. I realised that things weren't as black and white as I first thought. I made many wonderful friends and had my calling confirmed. (and one of my favourite moments...I intubated a dummy for the first time ever!)

This course is invaluable and was definitely one of the highlights of my missions career. I would highly recommend this course to any medical professional out there considering going into missions, even short term.

Breaking News!

This year's Intermed Practicum had been planned for September 14-30, to go to Vanuatu. This year we were hoping to assist Camp Shining Light staff in accessing the small island of Totoba (near Santo) to bring medical care in Jesus' name to its population of around 600 people.

It is unfortunate that due to not meeting our minimum number of participants, it was decided at the Annual General meeting in May that this year's practicum will be cancelled. We plan to take the practicum to the same destination next year with the same leaders and a more feasible group.

It has been disappointing, but we know that He who hung the stars in the sky can be trusted with this! He will have us just where He needs us, as we seek to glorify His name, and bring His love to those he came to call to Himself.

Amy Seymour-Walsh

PO Box 36

Crafers,

South Australia 5052

Australia

PHONE:

61 0408 679 347

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.intermed.org.au



About Our Organization...

Intermed is a Summer Intensive in International Health and Development, for Christian healthcare professionals who wish to work in the developing world.

Intermed is unique in Australasia, as it provides training in tropical medicine with

practical tools and development theory in order to equip health professionals for the developing world.

Intermed prides itself on its quality of teaching and breadth of education, as well as the strong community focus and relationships formed during the course.