

Outreach Programme – Ear camp November 2015

Story 1

Puskar Shaahi

Puskar was one of the first patients at the new Ear Hospital and Training Centre. He was dropped off by an uncle on the first day of the hospital opening, having been referred by INF doctor Shirley Heywood from the Surkhet Clinic. Puskar, 14, had experienced pain and deafness in his ear since early childhood. At the official opening ceremony on 3 November 2015, the day after the hospital opened to the public, Puskar had already had an operation on his right ear, and watched the proceedings from beneath his hooded sweatshirt, which was hiding the bandage around his head.

Puskar had traveled a long way to Pokhara for the operation and had nowhere to stay for the week, he therefore was offered a bed in the male ward. At the end of the week patients are requested to return for a check up, bandage change and post-operative care advice. Over the week Puskar became a familiar face to all the staff and volunteers as he wandered the grounds during the week between operation and check up, usually with a smile on his face.

Puskar was well cared for by the staff at EHTC who took time to talk with him, play cards and keep him somewhat entertained between their duties. Puskar even received some special visits from INF volunteers and their family, to keep him amused, adding to his joy that he now has his hearing restored and has no more pain. He was however, very much looking forward to returning to his family and friends so he can play football and cricket again.



Puskar on the final day, awaiting for assessment, re-bandage and discharge

Story 2

Sheetal Sharma

Sheetal came to the Ear Camp with hope for a future with hearing.

Sheetal Sharma, nicknamed “Aggrim”, came with his parents from Parwat District looking for a cure for Sheetal’s deafness. At nearly five years old, his parents had taken Sheetal to see various ENT doctors in Nepal and he was given a hearing aid in a past consultation. With limited hearing Sheetal can repeat a few sounds, but his hearing is diminishing and his well-researched parents had been advised that the answer for their only son might be a cochlear implant. Unfortunately an implant is a highly specialised and expensive procedure; one which the facilities (and budget) at EHTC don’t provide. Time is running out for Sheetal’s hope for hearing – at nearly five years old it may already be too late for surgery that is just out of reach.

So, what hope is there for Sheetal’s future without hearing? One option is a cochlea implant at Kathmandu Teaching hospital; however this is very expensive and would require trips for follow up.

What education potential is there? He may try a school for hearing impaired. However, there is ongoing stigmatization associated with being deaf in Nepal and this would further associate him with having a disability.



Sheetal and his parents, following his assessment at the Ear Hospital

Story 3

Bhim Bahadur Thakuri

Bhim Bahadur Thakuri had a different reason to most to be excited about the opening of the ear hospital.

Bhim is a former leprosy patient of Green Pastures Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre (GPHRC) and, despite having had surgery on his hands, feet and right eye in the past, he requires special attention in his daily routine to care for his hands and feet. His hands are insensitive because of his condition and he needs to check them every hour for signs of damage. To care for them, he soaks them in water and regularly applies ointment. He also needs to wear special shoes for his foot deformity.

Because of the complications of his condition, Bhim has not had employment for several years. His wife herds buffaloes on the GP farm to earn some money to help keep their family of four. His son and daughter, having failed their school leaving certificates, stay at home and look after their goats; they cut grass and work in the fields to earn extra income.

Bhim was assessed for a cleaning job at the hospital. He proved to be very thorough, followed all the instructions, and so has acquired a job cleaning the toilets and facilities. Bhim is delighted to have some employment and is performing his job with vigour and pride.



Bhim Bahadur Thakuri with his certificate received for participation in the Ear Outreach Programme

Story 4

Guma Devi Baniya

Guma Devi Baniya, 61, lives a village life, not far from the GPHRC complex in Pokhara. She works in the fields near her home and looks after buffalo, oxen and her pet dog. Guma Devi has never married, but is close to her younger sister who has three children. For a year prior to the Ear Camp, Guma Devi had been experiencing headaches and pain in her ear. She heard about the camp and attended with her sister.

Although hearing problems were not known in her families' history, a medical examination diagnosed chronic suppurative otitis media (CSOM), a chronic inflammation of the middle ear and mastoid cavity, which through perforation of the ear drum results in hearing loss of varying severity. The medical team operated to close the perforation (myringoplasty) and Guma Devi looks forward to returning to her simple life, without headaches and pain.

Story 5

Bhumi Raj Thapa

Bhumi Raj is a farmer who lives near GPHRC. At 22 years old, he is the youngest of five children, and works in nearby wheat, rice and vegetable fields to earn an income. Being the only member of his family who has experienced any ear problems, Bhumi Raj came along to the Ear Camp with his didi pupu (aunty) for an examination to work out the cause of his ear pain. He was diagnosed with chronic suppurative otitis media (CSOM - chronic inflammation of the middle ear and mastoid cavity) which had resulted in a perforated ear drum. The medical team operated to close the perforation (myringoplasty).

Post-operation Bhumi Raj said that he now has no pain and that his hearing is good. He is already back at work in the fields.



Bhumi RajThapa with his aunt following his operation, and a week later on the final day post-check up

Story 6

Bal Krishna Tiwari

Bal Krishna Tiwari is a 44 year old rice farmer who lives in the Lekhnath District, approximately 10 km south east of Pokhara. He lives across Begnas Tal, so to get to the town centre to catch the bus to Pokhara, Bal Krishna rows in one of his two boats which he keeps to take tourists across the lake.

Since the age of 9 Bal Krishna experienced ear infections, which would clear up with medicine, but then return. Eight years ago he received a hearing aid for his right ear through the Western Regional Hospital, however he was experiencing difficulty with background noise and was missing out on conversation with his friends.

Bal Krishna saw David Hine at his former Lakeside clinic and was referred to the new Ear Hospital for a check up and hearing aid for his left ear as well. His hope was for clearer hearing in both his ears so he can participate in the conversation he misses with his friends and family of five at home.



Bal KrishnaTiwari showing his existing hearing aid and how pleased he is to get some expert advice at the hospital

Story 7

Praya Pariyar

Praya Pariyar, age 3, came from Tutunga in Pokhara with his mother, aunt (mother's didi) and brother. They had heard about the ear hospital outreach from his aunt who heard an announcement at Ram Ghat church. Praya had been experiencing a decline in his hearing, and had suffered wax and a discharge from his left ear for about a year. He was also still in shock following the earthquake in April, and is unable to speak if he sees someone that he has not met before. Praya was examined and had his ear syringed to clean it out. His mother had been diagnosed with a perforated ear drum and was due to have an operation, and his older brother, Pratik (8) was also having his ears syringed.

Praya's aunt and uncle are the only Christians in his family. His aunt attends Chauthe Bible College in Pokhara. As an encouragement, staff were able to say that INF have been praying for the patients each day.



Praya Pariyar having his ear syringed by volunteer Gill Butt (from New Zealand) (left) and with his family (including brother Pratik who also had his ears syringed)

Story 8

Shushaut Pariya

Shushaut Pariya, age 9, was brought to the hospital by his mother and grandmother who had heard about the camp by word of mouth. They live in Hariyali Marga, Pokhara, where his mother does a cleaning job at a school. His father has TB and suffers from epilepsy so cannot work and the family struggles financially. They had to take out a loan to cover the costs of attending the clinic.

Sushaut attended the INF ear camp two years ago in Pokhara at which time he was told to return at this time. Sushaut failed his last year at school as he was unable to hear clearly and was unable to keep up. His grandmother said that he needed to sit at the front of the class. A hearing test indicated his hearing was slightly decreased. He was suffering from pain and infection in both ears and was diagnosed with bilateral perforations and a myringoplasty was performed on his right ear. The surgeon (Wayne Butt) attested that the operation went well.



Shushaut Pariya, asleep following a successful myringoplasty operation

Story 9

Radika Khati

Radika Kahti, now 5 years old, attended the Ear Camp at Burtibang three years ago with her mother and grandfather. At that time her grandfather was given hearing aids (although he apparently stopped wearing them after 3 weeks!) and Radika was the recipient of a hat and jumper from knitters in the UK. She now lives in Ram Bazaar, Pokhara, and attended the Ear Outreach Programme in November.

Radika's mother said that she had been ill at birth and was unable to feed her baby. She believed this was due to an evil spirit and so until she was able to give her milk at three months of age, Radika was given buffalo milk. Radika had been ill on several occasions in her infancy, but not with ear ache, however at the age of 3 and a half her mother noticed that she had severe hearing loss. Her mother can understand Radika's limited speech and would like her to attend a regular school, however the school has indicated that they won't allow her to attend. She does not want her to attend a school for the deaf.

Radika has been given hearing aids (by Walter) however it is unsure how much difference they make. She will be followed up with Sandra Eisner for therapy and advice on education possibilities.

Radika's father works in a metal works and does not wear ear protection.



Left: Radika with her mother visiting the Ear Camp at Burtibang 3 years ago

Right: A smiling Radika awaiting further consultation with specialists at EHTC

Story 10

Durga Devi Lamsal

Durga Devi Lamsal lives in Sardi Khola-Kaski, 2 hours from Pokhara, with her husband, son (17) and daughter (8). Her husband is a teacher and Durga is a social mobiliser in their community. She heard about the INF hospital through the VDC health post.

Durga (39) had been experiencing pain in her ear for a year before seeking treatment at a private hospital. When she came to EHTC, she was diagnosed with a perforated ear drum and was operated on. She had three days in hospital, and prior to the at the post-op care advice given on the final day she said she had a little pain still, but was optimistic this would pass in time.



Durga Devi Lamsal in the hall on the final day of the Outreach Programme, awaiting post-operation care advice

Story 11

Prem and Kesh Babadur

Prem Babadur and Kesh Kumari Pariyar are maize and millets farmers from a village about 2 hours from Pokhara. They have 3 sons, 2 daughters, 2 daughter-in-laws and 3 granddaughters.

They had heard about the ear camp through a relative. Kesh Kumari (49) had been experiencing fluid coming out of her ear and required an operation to repair the ear drum, while Prem (52) had a large cyst on his right ear that was removed. Both were recovering well post-operation.



Prem Babadur and Kesh Kumari Pariyar after follow-up on the final day of the Outreach Programme

Story 12

Zac Hilder

Zac's Mum volunteers with INF Nepal in the Simpani office in Pokhara. Zac (7) and his brother Elijah (10) attend the Primary Study Centre on the GPHRC campus and knew all about the opening of the new Ear Hospital this week because it was well talked about at home and school. They went to visit the Centre mid-week to play with Puskar, one of the patients who was visiting for a week for an operation. However, they didn't think they would go as out-patients as well! Elijah has a short history of ear complications which resulted in the insertion of gromets at the age of four, whereas Zac had no history of ear problems and appeared to have an acute sense of hearing. Their parents thought it was worthwhile to attend the Centre for a routine check up on Saturday while so many medical specialists were in town. While Elijah was quickly dismissed, Zac was diagnosed with glue ear in his left ear; He squirmed with discomfort, and hence had to be held still, as a life time of ear wax was removed from both ears, and he was prescribed with antibiotics, drops and instructions to return in a month for another assessment and an audiology test. He says he can already hear so much better, so his Mum now knows that when he is called multiple times, it really is because he's concentrating hard on the task at hand, not just because he can't hear her!



Dr Lukas examining Zac's right ear and Zac showing his patient record and diagnosis.