

Update on cataract surgeons and ophthalmic nurses supported by African Petroleum

The Gambia

The 5 surgeons and nurses supported by African Petroleum started their internships in September 2013 and completed them at the end of February 2014. Three of them are already posted to eye units that were grossly underserved - Basse Health Centre in the Upper River Region, Brilkamaba Health Centre in the Upper River Region and Brufut Health Centre in West Coast II Region.

Two of the surgeons are temporarily posted at Sheikh Zayed Regional Eye Centre in Kanifing until in July 2014 when they will be deployed to the AFPRC General Hospital in Farafenni and Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital in Banjul. They are currently part of the eye care team in the tertiary hospital and are supervised by the resident ophthalmologist. As the main referral hospital in the country, their stay in SZRECC gives them the opportunity to come face-to-face with complicated eye cases, and gain hands-on experience in the management of these cases.

Case Study:

Alasana Touray is one of cataract surgeons whose training was funded by African Petroleum. He recently performed a successful double cataract surgery on Sainey Baldeh. Sainey lives in a village about 15 kilometres from the nearest eye health service, and was blind for nearly 2 years. He had visited several marabouts (traditional healers) where he spent over 2,000 Dalasis (about US\$58) – far more than the family could afford.

Sainey's right eye was successfully operated by Alasana. The Sightsavers team met with Sainey at the clinic during a monitoring visit and decided to accompany him on his return to his village to see how his family and neighbours would receive him and react to the restoration of his vision. On arrival at the village, everyone was pleased but surprised to see him walk again without any support. His mother was speechless and didn't believe that his sight would be restored because they were told by the marabouts they visited that there was no hope for Sainey seeing again.

When we met again with Sainey a day after the surgery, he was filled with joy to see his one year old daughter for the first time after a successful surgery. He has since returned for the operation of his second eye.



From the left: Alasana (the cataract surgeon) with Sainey and his wife at the Soma Eye Unit

Liberia

The three ophthalmic nurses funded by African Petroleum, Obe, Martee and Harriet, have completed their internships and are now working in the South East Counties of Sinoe and River Gee.

They are involved in hospital based and outreach eye care services, working with the communities to raise awareness of eye health and services available. Since taking up assignment in the region, they have contributed to the screening of **32,653** eye care cases, the distribution of **13,411** treatments and supported **701** surgical interventions.

In 2014, the three ophthalmic nurses are aiming to conduct **13,335** screenings, **7,200** treatments and to support **306** surgeries, in contribution to the 2014 targets. The overall targets set for the entire region are:

- Screening **33,344** cases
- Treating **18,000** patients
- Performing **765** surgeries.

Below are some photographs of the trained ophthalmic nurses delivering eye health services in Sinoe and River Gee. All the photographs below also show the operating equipment that was purchased with the support of African Petroleum.

Sinoe County



Obe S. Wiah preparing patients for surgery



Obe S. Wiah supporting the cataract surgeon in the operation room

River Gee County



Matee Morris preparing patients for surgery, and with the cataract surgeon and one of their patients





Harriet Dennis screening patients at the hospital



Slit lamp purchased with AP funding

Senegal

All the students supported by African Petroleum have successfully completed their internships and received their certifications. All the surgeons successfully performed the 50 operations required to complete their training. Their certification letters have been sent to the Ministry of Health, and the National Eye Care Programme Co-ordinator will deploy all the graduates by May. The final graduate, M. Wane, will graduate in July 2014. He is presently in The Gambia for his training.