



THE GAMBIA SURGICAL TEAM

# The Gambia Update

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## Medicos en Accion

by Jon Just

We returned to The Gambia in [November 2015](#) for the second team trip of the year. It was a busy and successful trip.

### National Thyroid Clinic

We have been working with the local staff to develop a National Thyroid Clinic. Thyroid disease is very common in The Gambia and in general has not been well managed as there are few resources and few people with the knowledge and skills to look after these patients. Each trip we have been doing more thyroid surgery and trying to manage these patients on a more long term basis. This year we worked with the staff and administration of Serekunda Hospital to establish a formal National Thyroid Clinic. The goal is to have all patients in The Gambia with thyroid disease to be seen in one clinic so that they can be appropriately diagnosed, receive the investigations and medications they require, be referred for surgery when necessary and followed long term so that they are appropriately managed. We have helped establish a database as well as train local staff to have the local expertise to follow these patients. We have been working with The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to get their full support as well as interacting with other visiting teams from The

Netherlands and Spain to ensure continuity of care. The database will also allow for research and improvement in the diagnosis, treatment, follow-up and possibly prevention of thyroid disease in The Gambia.

### Surgical Program

In addition to many thyroid surgeries, we also did some more complex pediatric reconstructive procedures to allow these children to have a more normal life.

We saw many of our long term patients in follow up. It is very rewarding to see them do so well.

### Supportive Assistance

In addition to Serekunda Hospital, we have also worked each trip with Dr. Abubacarr Jah, a UK trained Gambian Urologist. He runs his own clinic, teaches medical students as well as provide free outreach clinics in remote villages. We were able to donate some instruments and supplies to his clinic and work with his staff to improve their skills.



### National Thyroid Clinic

Thyroid disease is very prevalent in The Gambia. To this end we have engaged the Ministry of Health to develop a National Thyroid Clinic.



### Future Missions

The spring 2016 mission was cancelled due to the Brussels attack.

We plan to return to The Gambia in November 2016. We hope to further solidify the National

Thyroid Clinic, do further surgery, help set up an endoscopy program as well as deliver chemotherapeutic medications that are not available in The Gambia. We look forward to another successful trip.