

# Neurosurgical training in Tanzania

**Tanzania** sits on the Indian Ocean in **East Africa** and has a population of over 53 million people. While the gross domestic product has been increasing in recent years, distribution of wealth remains a problem, and challenges in the distribution of health services abound. Neurosurgery is a unique case study of this problem. The challenges facing the development of neurosurgery in Tanzania are many and varied, built largely out of the special needs of modern neurosurgery. Task shifting (training nonphysician surgical providers) and 2-tiered systems (fast-track certification of general surgeons to perform basic neurosurgical procedures) may serve some of the immediate need, but these options will not sustain the development of a comprehensive neurosurgical footprint. Ultimately, long-term solutions to the need for neurosurgical care in Tanzania can only be fulfilled by local government investment in capacity building (infrastructure and **neurosurgical training**), and the commitment of Tanzanians trained in neurosurgery. With this task in mind, Tanzania developed an independent neurosurgery training program in **Dar es Salaam**. While significant progress has been made, a number of training deficiencies remain. To address these deficiencies, the Muhimbili Orthopedic Institute (MOI) Division of Neurosurgery and the University of Colorado School of Medicine Department of Neurosurgery set up a Memorandum of Understanding in 2016. This relationship was developed with the perspective of a "collaboration of equals." Through this collaboration, faculty members and trainees from both institutions have the opportunity to participate in international exchange, join in collaborative research, experience the culture and friendship of a new country, and share scholarship through presentations and teaching. Ultimately, through this international partnership, mutual improvement in the care of the neurosurgical patient will develop, bringing programs like MOI out of isolation and obscurity. From Dar es Salaam, a center of excellence is developing to train neurosurgeons who can go well equipped throughout Tanzania to improve the care of the neurosurgical patient everywhere. The authors encourage further such exchanges to be developed between partnership training programs throughout the world, improving the scholarship, subspecialization, and teaching expertise of partner programs throughout the world <sup>1)</sup>.

1)

Ormond DR, Kahamba J, Lillehei KO, Rutabasibwa N. Overcoming barriers to neurosurgical training in Tanzania: international exchange, curriculum development, and novel methods of resource utilization and subspecialty development. *Neurosurg Focus*. 2018 Oct;45(4):E6. doi: 10.3171/2018.7.FOCUS18239. PubMed PMID: 30269594.

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