

MY TRIP TO MALE

2/10/2009 to 2/11/2009

My Personal Thoughts

My visit coincided with the time when there were serious changes taking place at the Indra Gandhi Memorial Hospital [IGMH]. The major change was the talk of IGMH being privatised and also the wages of the employers being reduced due to the financial difficulties. Therefore, the moral of all the staff was very low and some doctors were actually leaving although they had hoped to stay for longer if the situation was different.

I also became aware that there were differences in the pay and in the educational opportunities between the maldivian nurses and the nurses from the Indian subcontinent. The maldivian nurses' pay was higher and there were more opportunities of self-development open to them. The majority of the foreign doctors only stayed for few years, as there were no opportunities of further education or promotion.

The agreement for Apollo Hospitals to manage the IGMH has been carried out in January, 2010. The nature of the agreement, valid for 20 year term, is such that Apollo would run and manage IGMH. This private-public partnership, I have been told, is making the doctors/nurses at IGMH, look for employment somewhere else.

My Personal Experience

On arrival at airport, I received excellent service regarding my visa. The airport staff was expecting me and made me feel welcome.

As I came out of the airport, I looked around to see if anyone has come to pick me up from the IGMH. I did not see anyone so after waiting for a while, I asked the security guard at the airport to ring Ahid [the volunteer co-ordinator]. Whilst I was talking on the phone to Ahid, a lady and two guys approached me and introduced themselves as the ones who have come to pick me up. The lady brought me to the IGMH and dropped me in an office in the hospital. From there, the accommodation officer took me to the nurses' "hostel". Here, I was shown to my room, which I was to share with another Indian nurse and asked to sign a form, accepting responsibility for my room, kitchen and the contents etc. I wonder if he thought, I was an Indian nurse come for employment! In fact, most of the people I met who did not know why I was there, did assume that I was there as an Indian nurse and had come for employment.

The nurses at the hostel showed me around the hospital and Male. I had changed some money and had bought a sim card for my mobile phone at the airport. Therefore, I was able to buy some food, some cutlery and contact my family in the UK. The

facilities at the hostel were very basic and all the nurses who were there were from the Indian subcontinent. Friday and Saturday are the like the “weekend” in Male so the offices were closed. I spend these two days looking around male and doing the shopping for food and cutlery. I did not receive any phone call from any official person to find out how I was and how was I getting on! If it was not for the nurses at the hostel, I would have been totally isolated in Male.

On Sunday, I went to the main hospital at 09.00 hours and asked for the head nurse at the customer service. I was informed to go to “Nursing Department” and inquire there. At the nursing department, the staff knew I was coming but did not know when. The nursing department introduced me to the clinical nurse on Intensive Critical Care Unit [ICCU], whose name was Shaly.

I attached myself to Shaly as she was the one who was going to arrange the teaching sessions with me. Shaly often came to ICCU on her days off and did put a lot of effort into arranging the lectures. I needed to use the computer to prepare/alter some PowerPoint presentations to make them suitable for teaching at IGMH. I was able to use the computer in ICCU and also joined the library so I could make use of the computer in the library. The teaching sessions and the workshops were opened to all the staff in IGMH and shaly had rang the wards etc and had make arrangements for certain staff to attend these sessions. My time was spend preparing and carrying out lectures, workshops and observing and helping on ICCU. We decided it would be good idea to give handouts of the lecture notes so Shaly had to buy the paper for the handouts. I am very grateful to Shaly for her time and her friendship.

In the first week, I met quite few people who influenced the running of the IGMH, from the faculty nurse department to the minister of health, chief officer etc. My allowance was given to me on the 13/10/2009 after I contacted the finance department.

I took myself to look around a health center in Villingilli and was fortunate to observe a student nurse carrying out a home visit. Community nursing is a very new aspect in Maldives and I was told that the nurse’s training now included health education and some community nursing aspects.

I was keen to visit at least one Island hospital and although I asked few departments from the minister of health to the chief officer of IGMH, my request was not granted due to the financial difficulties. However, I did manage to visit Gan Regional Hospital in the Laamu Atoll, which was arranged by the president’s office. I contacted the president who very kindly met me for a short time and informed me that his department would be able to arrange my trip. The trip to the Island was great and I enjoyed it thoroughly. Although I only stayed there one night, I was made very welcome. A community officer called Faisal and his wife who is a nurse at the Gan hospital looked after me. They took me on a fishing trip, showed me around the three islands in the Laamu Atoll and let me spend a day at the Gan Regional Hospital. This young couple, exceeded in their duty of looking after me and they both were supposed

to be having days off. I am very grateful for their warm hospitality and genuine friendship.

On the 2nd November, the day of my return to UK, I went to the chief officer's department to find out what arrangement were made for me to take me to the airport. This department was not aware of my leaving date, however, the secretary managed to arrange the transport to the airport.

TEACHING

Lectures/workshops

Held seven of these and majority were attended by nurses from all departments of the hospital. Duration of these lectures/workshops were approximately two hours. In total 56 nurses attended.

Bachelors Nurses/student nurses

Teachings on ICCU for trainee nurses

Resource File

Devised a Resource File with the handouts of the lectures given and some handouts of the lectures not given. Also included in the file some ECGs' and rhythm strips and advanced life support algorithm. File was left on ICCU but other departments were made aware of its existence.

External Cardiac Pacing

Devised a protocol for external cardiac pacing

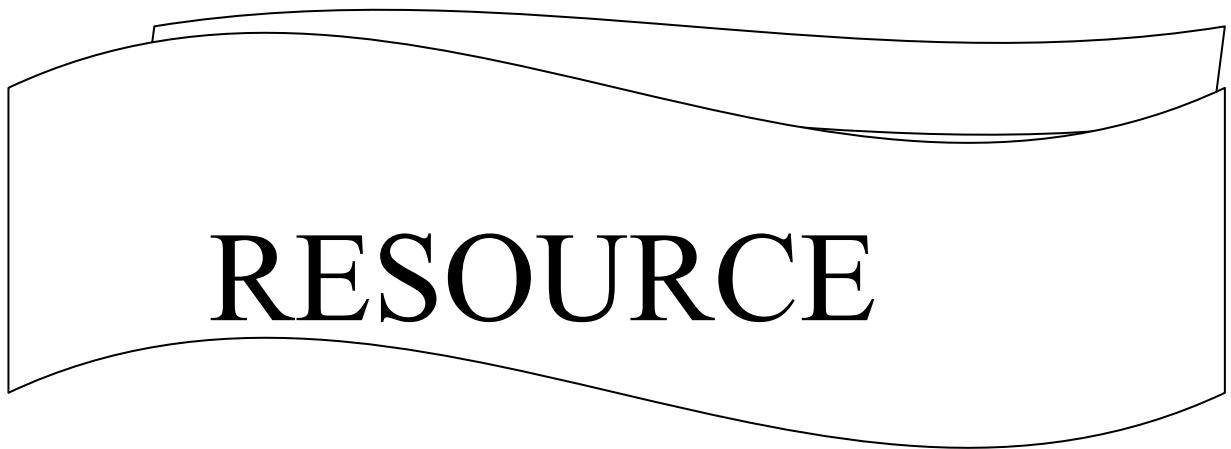
VOLUNTEERS

Besides the lectures I organised, I worked with IGMH staff. I enjoyed my visit, learned a lot about maldivian health system, culture and thoroughly enjoyed meeting the staff at the IGMH. Either on my own or with Indian nurses, I managed to visit places like the Villingilli, Hulhumale, various trips around Male and saw some famous landmarks such as the fish market, fruit market, president's palace etc. There were times, however, when it felt quite lonely as I was not able to discuss important concerns/worries with anyone. Therefore, I would recommend that future volunteers to go in twos' or more. I also feel that volunteering trips to be organised so that there is a contact person who will look out for the welfare of the volunteers. This person will make contact on arrival and through out the trip and ensure that volunteers are settling in and meeting their aims.

Since IGMH has been privatised and will be managed by the Apollo Hospitals, I have not done a report on the recommendations, as I am sure, the Apollo management will be completely different.

I would like to thank Friends of Maldives for giving me this wonderful opportunity to share my knowledge with the IGMH staff and enjoy their hospitality and the Maldives.

Somma Ahir.
01/02/2010



RESOURCE



FILE



FILE



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