

Visit to Edith Opperman Clinic, Mbare

Thursday 1st April 2010

1. First Impressions

On arrival, we were greeted by Dr. Chonzi (representing the Harare City Council Health Dept.,) Matron and Sister-in-Charge. During our visit, we were accompanied by Mrs Belinda Ndowa, Mr. Albert Ndowa, Mr. Neil Menzies, Miss Maya Menzies and Mr. Cleopas Zvirawa (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and formerly Zimbabwe Mission, Geneva.) Dr. Chonzi indicated that the whole clinic is currently under renovation (painting, new tiling, electrical fittings, new ceilings and ablution facilities) over the Easter weekend. The entire renovation programme is financed by the Harare City Council Engineering Department (headed by Mr. Boni) and during the Easter break the whole maternity unit was relocated within the nearby polyclinic.

During our visit we were joined by Mr. Mashura, medical administrator and Mr. Boni, from the Harare City Engineering Department responsible for the renovation programme. The entire clinic was a hive of activity with painters, carpenters and electricians working briskly. The maternity unit is due to reopen on Tuesday 6th April. Undoubtedly, the renovations underway will result in a hygienic and pleasant environment for both the staff and the patients of the Edith Opperman Maternity Hospital.

2. Renovations Observed

As Dr. Chonzi led our group through the clinic we were pleased to observe repainting of the entrance to the clinic, nurses' tearoom, labour wards, corridors and ablution facilities. As work was proceeding, ZimHealth donations, such as furnishings had been temporarily stored away and it was, at times, difficult to establish how effectively the equipment was being used. Nonetheless, we were able to observe the obstetric equipment, sterilising units, sphygmomanometers (blood pressure checks) and resuscitaire in use (housed in the outpatients' sector until Tuesday 6th April.) Neil Menzies and Albert Ndowa endeavoured to paint the ZimHealth logo with black paint and a paintbrush on to certain items of equipment. However a patient was in labour and the enamel paint used was not appropriate for plastic surfaces. At present, Albert Ndowa is in possession of two ZimHealth stencils. Albert has kindly promised to pass by with a can of spray paint and mark the donations from ZimHealth in order to identify them more readily in the future. One ZimHealth stencil should certainly be transferred to Bulawayo for ZimHealth projects at Pelandaba, another should stay with the Ndowa family or Daniel Makuto in Harare, a third stencil has been brought back to Geneva for use whenever appropriate.



(left) ZimHealth-Europe welcomed by Dr. Chonzi (right) Dr. Chonzi showing building materials and tiles for renovations



(left) Hot water geyser donated by ZimHealth and (right) Painters and Carpenters at work

As we toured the Edith Opperman facilities, Dr. Chonzi expressed a desire to establish a suitably equipped operating theatre in one of the labour wards, in order to undertake Caesarean sections and other necessary surgical interventions in safe conditions. He also considers that an ideal scenario would be for the Edith Opperman Maternity Hospital to have a resident doctor on site.

- The installation of an incinerator for the disposal of waste is currently under examination by the Harare City engineering specialists.
- Dr. Chonzi feels that drilling a borehole would also ensure greater autonomy for the Mbare clinics.



Explanations for the layman from Dr. Chonzi (Harare City Health Dept.)



(left) Renovation of ablution block and (right) Neil Menzies and Albert Ndowa paint the ZimHealth logo on donated equipment



Resuscitaire, hot air steriliser and obstetric equipment donated by ZimHealth

3. Current Health statistics for Harare District, as Communicated by Dr. Chonzi

Dr. Chonzi mentioned that 96 cases of measles among children had been traced this year. 200 cases of typhoid have been diagnosed so far in 2010 – the epicentre of the typhoid outbreak is believed to originate in the Waterfalls suburb. During the current rains a number of cholera cases were once again observed in the suburbs.

Edith Opperman Maternity Hospital

- Number of patients consulting per day (including antenatal and postnatal patients) in March 2010 was 32 patients/day.
- Number of births at Edith Opperman in 2010 was 12-14 babies per day. During the morning of our visit 6 births were recorded, and 1 case was referred to Parirenyatwa district hospital.

4. Partners Presently Involved with Mbare Polyclinic and Edith Opperman Maternity Unit

Dr. Chonzi informed the ZimHealth delegation that Munich (Germany) city authorities had provided Mbare Polyclinic and the maternity unit with support prior to the 2007 election. For two years the twinning arrangements have been suspended. Recently Munich city authorities have expressed a desire to resume the twinning arrangements.

Pharmaceutical requirements are presently provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross and The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria with a broad selection of drugs supplied to Harare City Health department.

Our ZimHealth delegation was able to visit the Drugs Storeroom. An efficient handwritten distribution system, requiring the pharmacist sign out, indicating prescribed amount, date and checks were observed. Dr. Chonzi remarked that a computerised system should, at some point be contemplated. However, this is not a high priority until such a time that all Harare polyclinics prepare to adopt identical IT systems.

5. Fees

Fees were posted outside the clinics:

Adult consultation = U\$5.00

Child consultation = U\$3.00

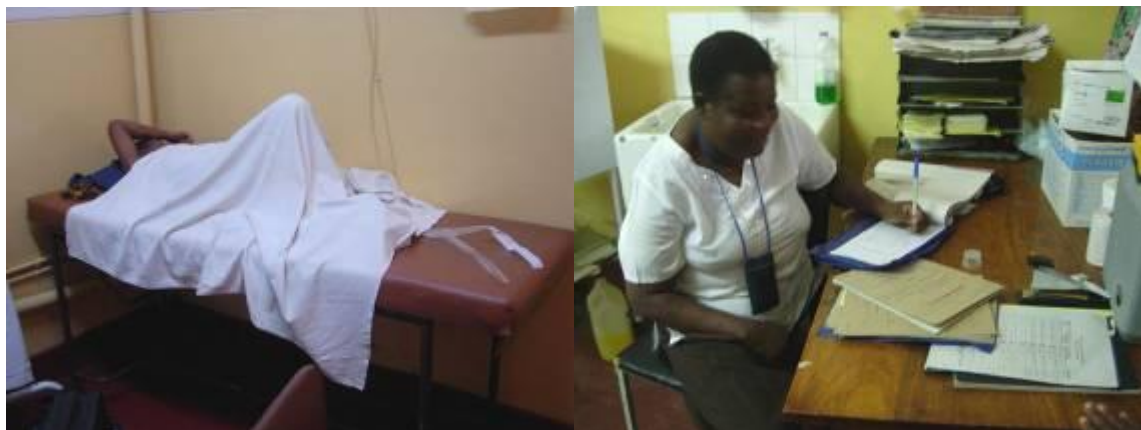
Maternity fee = U\$5.00

All fees were posted in U\$ and South African rand.

The Sister-in-Charge has discretion, at all times, to waive consultation and drugs fees.



(left) Outpatients waiting area and (right) Notice of Fees (April 3rd 2010)



Mother in labour, birth registrations are undertaken in situ

6. Mbare Polyclinic

At the time we visited, the maternity unit was temporarily situated within the precincts and various wards of the Mbare Polyclinic ward. In the course of our tour we were also shown:

- A room used for RTA (road traffic accidents).
- An isolation room for contagious patients, subsequently transported by ambulance to the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Harare.

- A diagnosis and counselling room: the Mbare Polyclinic is able to undertake rapid HIV, TB and malaria diagnosis. Patients are immediately provided, when necessary with counselling by a qualified counsellor, in the same precincts. During our visit 4 patients, 2 pregnant women and 2 with children were awaiting HIV diagnosis. Dr. Chonzi and the staff expressed the hope that The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria might shortly approve amounts for microscopes and further laboratory requirements.

7. Edith Opperman ‘Wish List’ Expressed by Staff During the ZimHealth Representative’s Visit April 2010

- One more hot water geyser for the ablution block
- A TV set for outpatients
- Power back up: generator or solar panels to be installed for lighting and basic equipment in the clinic.
- Professional Development and training for: Family Planning programmes, Reproductive Health, Health for newborn children, antenatal and postnatal care
- Install an incinerator (in accordance with Red Cross and Health Dept. recommendations.
- An operating theatre for surgical interventions.

8. Thanks

In the course of our visit we observed again and again that the staff (indeed, patients) were well aware of ZimHealth efforts and projects. Information provided was clear, even for the layman, without a medical background. Requests for assistance from associations such as ZimHealth seemed, in general, to be realistic and relevant.

We thank Dr. Chonzi from the Harare City Health Department and all his staff at the Edith Opperman maternity clinic and Mbare Polyclinic for their very kind and helpful reception.

Ian Menzies, 3rd April 2010
Deputy Treasurer, ZimHealth Association.

Take a tour of the images in the [ZimHealth photo gallery](#) to see more on the visit.