

Sonic Healthcare has committed over A\$100,000 per annum for an initial five year period to support the development of laboratory medicine at the HEAL Africa Hospital.



In our previous issue..



In this report on our laboratory project at the HEAL Africa Hospital in the Democratic Republic of Congo, we interview Dr. Kasereka, MD, the Medical Director of the laboratory.

**As a tertiary hospital in East Africa, what are your hopes for the future for the HEAL Africa hospital?**

Comme hôpital tertiaire le défi est vraiment majeur dans notre région. As a tertiary hospital, the challenge is great in our area. One of our objectives for the future is to set up an Anatomical Pathology department whose major goal will be the prevention and checking of cancers by slides, screening biopsies and diagnosis for a province with a population of close to 10 million people.

**Do you think the changes that are being made to the laboratory have had a positive impact on patient care at HEAL Africa? Have they helped staff in the laboratory provide a better service to the doctors at HEAL?**

In the last 3 years, with Sonics formidable assistance (technical, scientific and material), our staff have considerably improved their competence and laboratory technical procedures and acquired new high-tech skills. Thanks to Coulter, patients now have rapid access to their results and doctors can rapidly provide the necessary treatments.

Microbiology has considerably improved the efficient prescribing of antibiotics.

**How are your studies progressing in Kinshasa and are you enjoying the experience?**

The studies, started four months ago in Kinshasa, are going well. It is a five-year programme and includes an off-site training course in an Anatomical Pathology department due to insufficient equipment in the home country. The experience of being a Pathologist is much better. I enjoy it. It allows me to be in the middle, like an umpire between the doctor and the patient, to confirm the diagnosis and open the way to treatment.

**What role do you think the pathology laboratory at HEAL Africa will play in raising the healthcare standards of the region and the local community?**

As said previously, the challenge is great. Our laboratory and hospital intend to fulfil their role in quality control and quality assurance of the other laboratories in the province and will also enable research and training in the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and palliative care of the cancers in the province in accordance with the RDC programme.

**Un grand merci à Giselle Petitcolin .. for kindly and expertly translating Dr Kasereka's responses from French to English.**





# project in the Democratic Republic of Congo

**"The Sonic container... was full, full, full of laboratory supplies!  
The commitment of Sonic Healthcare to raise the standard of  
laboratory services is so encouraging to us."**

Lyn Lusi,  
Project manager, HEAL Africa Hospital,  
commenting on the first delivery.

***Do you see the hospital and the laboratory becoming  
centres of excellence in the region?***

We will be the first in the province to organise four medical biology departments, Microbiology, Parasitology, Clinical Biology and Anatomical Pathology, with qualified staff and adequate equipment corresponding to patient needs.



***Do you feel that with your training, and the increased  
training and equipment for the lab and its staff, that  
more overseas doctors will be attracted to HEAL Africa to  
work and teach the local medical staff?***

We objectively believe that, with qualified staff at the head of Medical Biology at the HEAL Africa teaching hospital and with the setting up of adequate equipment, the hospital will become a place of exchanges, training and continued education that will attract many physicians and research scientists.

***What made you choose pathology as a specialty?***

I wanted to be a surgeon but seeing how testing was done, often with unreliable results, I shared an idea with Dr Lusi. Dr Lusi did not hesitate to encourage me and, together with Sonic Healthcare, it was decided to send a doctor to continue his professional education. He would supervise the laboratory.



*Dr Kasereka, Hospital Doctor*



*Dr Kasereka, Ironman*

***What are your main areas of interest in pathology?***

As the head of the laboratory in the last two years, and thanks to the efforts of Lindsay and Richard, we have set up Microbiology, Biochemistry, Haematology and Parasitology departments. It was therefore essential that I also take an interest in Anatomical Pathology with the key objective being the setting up of a centre for screening and diagnosis of neoplastic diseases.

*Dr Kasereka  
Laboratory Medical Director  
HEAL Africa Hospital, Goma*



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The existing beds

In this HEAL Africa Hospital project report, we delve into some of the stories behind what has been shipped in our 3 most recent containers.

• **Hospital beds, metal adjustable .... x 45**

We have had these beds donated for use in the new hospital wards. While they can be bought in nearby Rwanda, they would be prohibitively expensive. A further 20 beds will become available in early 2012.

• **Table saw, blades, screws, bolts, saws, planer, etc ....**

There is a workshop making crutches for patients. As you can imagine, the rate of limb injuries due to mines, conflict, traffic accidents and deformities (due to malnutrition, infection etc) is very high and there is a huge demand for proper crutches. The workshop has been set up in one of the containers that we donated.

Until now all the tools they have had are hand saws and other hand tools, making the manufacture of crutches extremely laborious and time consuming. This process can be sped up by a factor of at least 10 with the basic equipment we are donating. As a result more people will have access to crutches when they need them.

• **Air compressor ..... x 1**

We donated some air-powered tools last year – a percussion drill, jemmy, drill etc. but unfortunately the hospital only has one air compressor and this is also used by the dental clinic to power their drills. Now the maintenance people will have their own compressor.

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• **Mosquito netting.**

Many old-fashioned treadle sewing machines are used at the hospital to give traumatised women sewing skills and a little more control of their futures. To complement the hospital beds that are being donated, we thought we would organise some mosquito nets to help combat malaria, etc.

We are donating WHO international standard netting that is impregnated with pyrethrum. In the container will be enough netting for 1000 nets, including one made to WHO specifications - for use as an example. The women will be part of a six-month trial to produce the nets for the hospital and also, hopefully, to sell them back to the UN for distribution throughout Africa.

The funding for this is coming from Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology and the suppliers are heavily discounting the materials for the trial. *Isn't that fantastic!!!!*

• **Computers ... x 26, Admin servers ... x 2, Radiology server, X-Ray view stations ... x 30, Lead glass, UPS power backup, switching gear, telephones ... x 80, cabinets, cables, etc ...**

An IT Engineer from Brisbane, Paul, has taken on the huge task of installing a Cat 6 cable network within the Hospital and Administration area. Two large servers will enable the use of telephones (they will be able to dial the lab for collections or results) and monitors in each ward. This will mean that results and histories will be available online to all wards, the lab and theatre.

Murray Thorn, a Sonic radiologist, is moving the radiology department to a digital system and there are 30 special screens for viewing X-Rays from a central server. Quite soon we will be able to post lab results online so that they are available as soon as they are completed.

This has been financed in part by a Google grant and from private donations.



# project in the Democratic Republic of Congo

**There will be a field visit by Sonic people early in 2012. Our containers will be unpacked, the new lab assembled and staff will be taught how to use and maintain the new equipment.**

- **Containers ... x 2**

Paid for by an HADA grant, they will be used as offices as soon as they are emptied.

The containers we have already sent are being used as outpatient consultation offices while the new building is being completed. Then they will be used by the maintenance department, the new crutches workshop and as secure storage at the farm village that the hospital runs outside Goma.

Other containers going this year will help extend the special workshops that currently operate in the open air.

- **Lab benches, fittings and sinks. Anit-viral/bacterial vinyl flooring ... 5 palettes**

These will be used in the new lab being built as part of the new main hospital building. The grout in the previously used tiled concrete benches has been found to harbour all sorts of viral and bacterial contaminants and is very difficult to keep clean - and they have found Tetanus in the grout of the floor tiles in the wards. So they are going to use this vinyl flooring, donated by the Norwegian Government, for the new wards.

- **Neck braces ... x 10, exercise ball, parallel bars ... 1 set**

Donated by Melbourne Physiotherapy Group, headed up by Tammy Shepherd. This group, as well as some from the US, has been sending over equipment each year in the containers we send. They have made huge changes in the Physio department at HEAL and as mentioned earlier there is a great demand for this department due to the large amount of Orthopaedic patients at the hospital.



• Containers ... x 2

- **Dressing Packs ... x 3000**

25 packs were donated by each of IPN's 125 GP practices. These packs will allow the hospital to change wound dressings *aseptically* - something not always possible previously.

- **Waste containers donated by manufacturer ... x 2**

The lockable 240-litre bins (there are now 6 of these at the hospital), as well as the sharps and contaminated waste bins we send each year, have made a huge difference to the health and safety of the patients and staff at the hospital. They are all part of a new system for handling waste which is starting in the wards, where biohazard waste is now put into appropriate containers, collected from the wards and placed into these wheeled bins for transport to the new incinerator that we sent last year.

Previously it was transported, with normal paper and food waste, around the hospital in wheel barrows.

- **White board, blackboards and school supplies -**

Donated by Sonic's Hunter Imaging Group. The blackboard will replace an ancient one used in the hospital school and, along with the whiteboard, enable them to take classes outside when the class room is overcrowded. Currently, sheets of paper tacked to a wall are being used to teach the doctors English. The school provides education to young patients at the hospital as well as the children of patients being treated at the hospital. Often the kids miss out on months of schooling due to illness or dislocation from their home regions.



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