



Transplanting Skills, For Life

## TLC Makes Medical History in Ghana

Transplant Links Community (TLC), a charity founded by a group of British doctors, has made medical history in Ghana performing the first kidney transplants in the country. All patients are all doing really well, and more transplants will follow.

The TLC team of volunteer surgeons, doctors, nurses and theatre staff from Birmingham worked alongside the renal team at the Korle Bu Hospital in Accra to perform living kidney transplants - where a healthy relative gives a kidney to a loved one suffering from kidney failure.

TLC was set up with the goal to save the lives of children and adults in developing countries who suffer from kidney disease. Through TLC, leading UK surgeons and medical teams take their skills to countries where they are most needed, and where dialysis is often not available. They work with medical teams on location helping them to develop their own expertise in running a living transplant program, allowing one person to save the life of another, often their own child. Healthy kidney donors are able to return to a normal life after donating a kidney. The transplants in the last week are the first step towards a long collaboration to support the development of a sustainable transplant programme at the Korle Bu - serving people throughout Ghana.

Dr Jennie Jewitt-Harris, founder and Chief Executive of TLC, said: "In many countries a transplant is the only chance of survival for someone with kidney failure. The costs of kidney dialysis are often out the reach of most families. This is a major milestone for the people of Ghana suffering from kidney failure"

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Transplant Surgeon Mr Andrew Ready, who is also Medical Director of Transplant Links, said: "This is the first time that we have taken a full team to a country where there has never been any kind of transplant before. In the UK, when patients are diagnosed with kidney failure, they're put onto dialysis and may have a transplant, which is something we tend to take for granted. That simply doesn't happen in the developing world where people are dying instead of getting treatment. In this visit we helped a sister to give a kidney to her brother, a Father to his son, and a wife to her husband. It's great to be finally bringing a team here to help them. They are all doing really well."

Dr Dwomoa Adu, Consultant Nephrologist and Trustee of TLC said "This visit will be one of a series of visits which are essential to ensure the safe transfer of skills over a period of time. It's not about turning up, operating and flying out again. This is the start of a long-term collaboration intended to support the development of an independent transplant unit serving the people of Ghana."

Dr Jewitt-Harris said "Everything has gone very well indeed. The TLC and Korle Bu teams are working well together and it's been an amazing experience. The patients are making excellent progress and their kidneys started working straight away. A tremendous effort has been made here. When we arrived on Sunday there was an empty brand new ward. Now it is buzzing with activity, teaching and patients whose lives have been transformed."

Mr Adrian Shaw, TLC Senior Operating Department Practitioner, was delighted "Talking to the patients and hearing their stories makes you realise the enormity of what TLC has achieved this week. I am really proud to have been involved."

At the beginning of 2008, Transplant Links flew 14 year old Felix Yeboah from Ghana to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham to have a kidney transplanted from his father to save his life. The operation was a great success and Felix and his father, Michael, returned home to Ghana. Mr Ready said: "We are delighted that they have both done so well. Felix now has a future, when he previously only had a few weeks left to live. It has always been the goal of TLC to give parents the chance to save the life of their own child. It's great to see him again. He looks really well, and is back to normal life which is just what everyone wanted."

Dr Jewitt-Harris said: "I am so excited that our vision has become a reality. The TLC dream was always to help one member of a family to save the life of their loved one. To see this come true is wonderful, and makes us all the more

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determined to expand our work elsewhere. We rely totally on donations to help us take our skills to these countries in our spare time, and are very grateful to all those who have contributed."

To make a donation to Transplant Links to support their work, or find out more please visit the website on [www.transplantlinks.org](http://www.transplantlinks.org).

Transplant Links is a UK registered charity no 1119923.

All media enquiries please to Dr Jennie Jewitt-Harris on +44 (0)7738 539633 or by email on [info@transplantlinks.org](mailto:info@transplantlinks.org).

Photographs can be supplied on request of the following: transplant operation in progress, the TLC and Korle Bu teams, TLC team members working alongside Korle Bu staff.



Andrew Ready and Nick Inston working and teaching in Ghana.