



**GAMMED**  
GAMBIA MEDICAL UK PARTNERSHIP



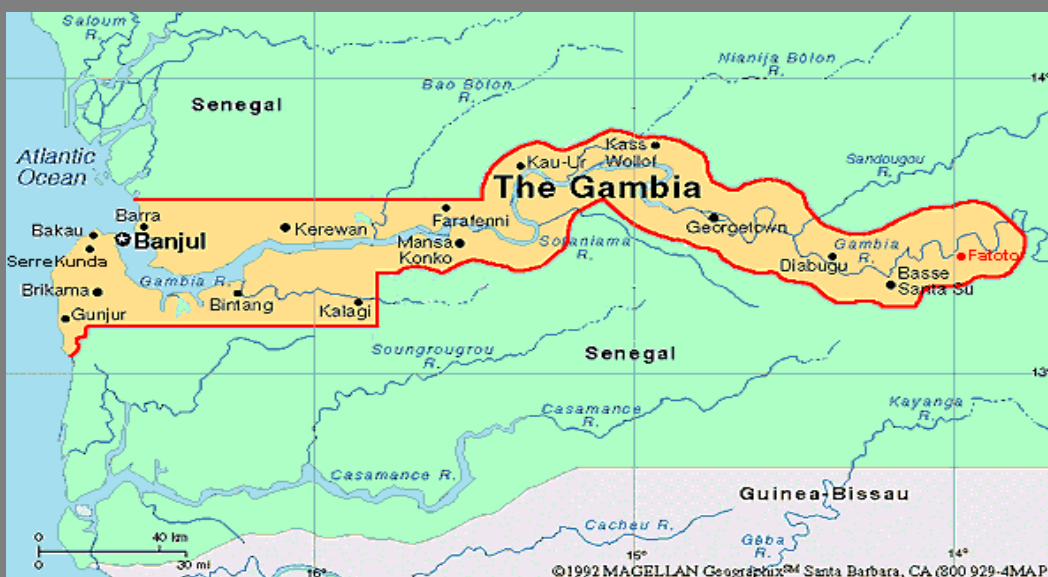
UK Registered Charity  
number: 1191320

The Gambia lies in West Africa and is the smallest Country within mainland Africa with a population of 2.3million.

It is an extremely poor country, in part, due to a previous dictator. Democracy was reinstated in January 2017 and there remains a stable government in place. Less than half of the population has access to electricity, and over a third of the country's urban population lives in slums.

According to 2018 figures, The Gambia spends \$81 on healthcare per capita (UK \$4620). There is a shortage of healthcare professionals. The Gambia has 0.1 physicians per 1000 people compared to approx. 3 per 1000 for western countries, one of the worst rates in the world

By Western standards healthcare provision is extremely limited. Most secondary healthcare, and all Orthopaedic surgery is provided in the Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital (EFSTH) in Banjul, the capital.





In the Gambia many patients with injuries use traditional medicine and healers.

Fractures are often bound with sticks and often go on to mal-unite resulting in significant permanent deformity.

The resulting deformities would pose a significant orthopaedic challenge to reconstruct the limb in the Western World, let alone in The Gambia.



Open fractures (where the skin is lacerated exposing the fractured bone to the outside world and bacteria) are an Orthopaedic & Plastic surgical emergency.

Without aggressive early treatment chronic bone infection will ensue. The fractures need to be surgically stabilised and wounds methodically cleaned, freshened and closed.

Often patients with open fractures in The Gambia use traditional medicine and the wounds largely go untreated. Many people therefore have chronic bone infection (Osteomyelitis) that will not resolve without surgical treatment.

The left circle shows the exposed fibula bone in a child. The circle to the right highlights the chronically infected bone.





Previously the provision of Orthopaedic services in the Gambia was provided by Locum Doctors from Cuba. Only basic procedures were undertaken.

In the summer of 2018 Dr. Kebba Marenah was employed as the Country's first Gambian Orthopaedic Consultant.

Kebba has completed all of his medical training in the UK including his Orthopaedic Registrar training in Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust (BSUH).



In February 2018 Kebba lead the Orthopaedic arm of the West African College of Surgeons Outreach programme to the Gambia.

He, and two Orthopaedic Consultants from BSUH (Mr James Gibbs & Mrs Lisa Leonard) performed surgery and taught in EFSTH for a week.

Together with Dr David Piggott (Consultant Anaesthetist from Oxford) they performed over twenty cases during the week, in challenging conditions, with poor resources.

Many of the cases were planned back in the UK and much of the kit needed was taken out having been sourced from donations by hospitals and the medical devices industry.





Out of that trip, Gam Med (Registered UK charity) was formed. The idea being that UK healthcare professionals would continue to give long-term help and support to Kebba in his ambition to raise the standards of hospital treatment in The Gambia.

One way is to continue regular outreach trips. In 2019 & 2020 a team of ten people went out for a week, unpaid and unfunded in their own time.

This included Anaesthetists, Orthopaedic Surgeons, Radiologists, a Plastic Surgeon, a Physiotherapist and a representative from the medical devices industry.

As per the previous year, surgical cases were performed and teaching & training provided.

We hope to return in 2022, Covid allowing.....



Our Anaesthetists train local Doctors, Nurses & Theatre Practitioners in regional anaesthetic techniques.

This means patients can have surgery without the need for a general anaesthetic.

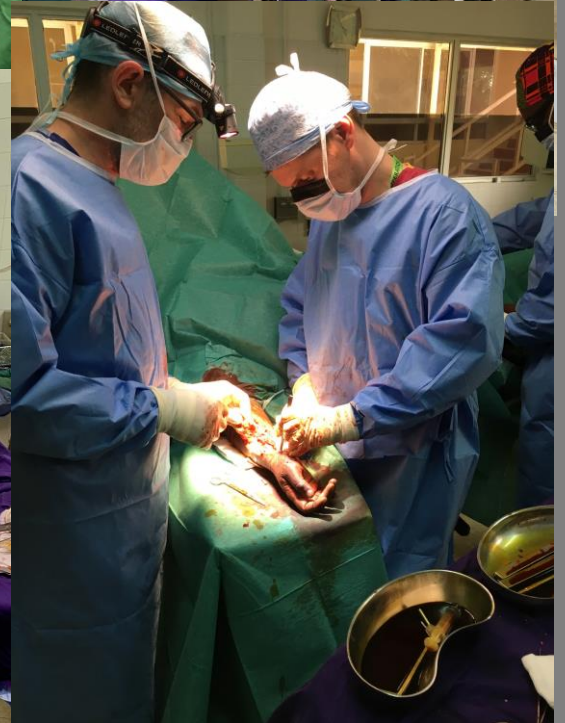
Training is also given in safe administration of general anaesthesia when needed.





Surgical teaching and training is provided to Doctors, Nurses and Theatre staff

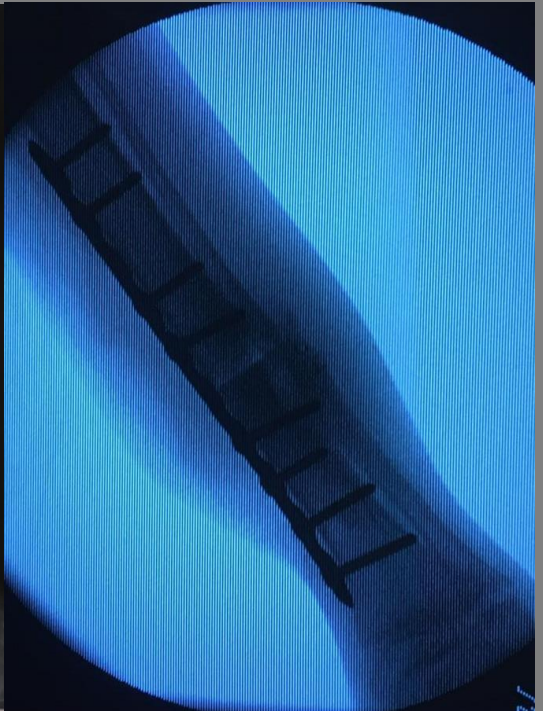
In the UK our Surgical Trainees are helping Gambian Trainees to pass international professional exams



Orthopaedic and plastic surgical cases are planned for the week coordinated by Kebba.

The majority of these are trauma cases or involve correcting deformities from previous injuries.

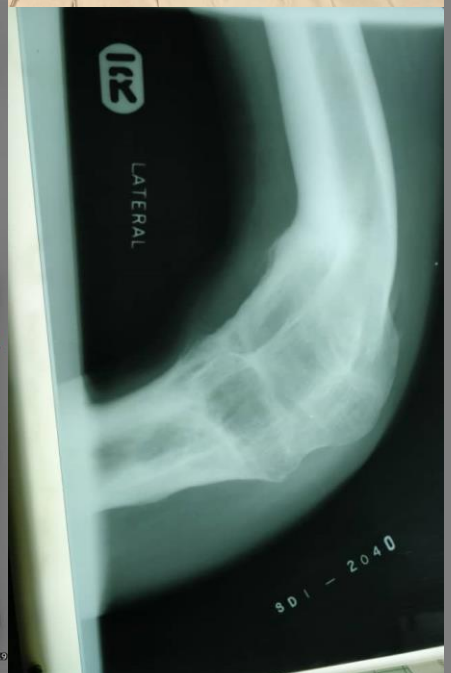
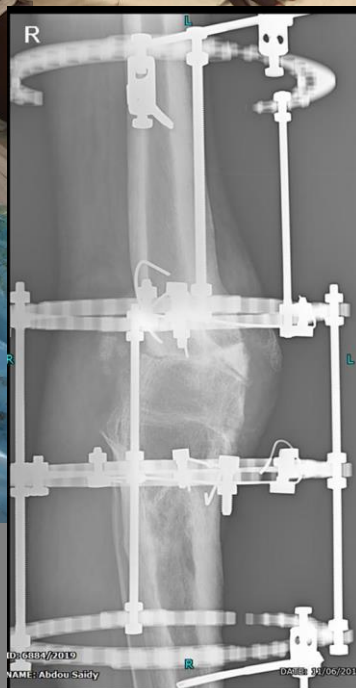
The images below show a mal-united fracture of the tibia (shin bone) sustained after a rice sack fell on this 8 year old boy. Because of a lack of adequate initial care the fracture healed with a 90 degree bend. We performed surgery to correct the deformity and straighten the leg.





This man was involved in a car crash some years ago. He sustained a fracture at the level of the knee. Because of a lack of adequate initial care the knee joint fused and the limb healed with a significant deformity.

Surgery was performed the Gam Med team to correct the deformity. The limb had to be immobilised in an external fixation device whilst it healed. This form of treatment is not normally available in The Gambia



Nice to see him again on our most recent trip





During our trips we also accumulate cases during the week as people learn that we are there.

This six year old girl had broken her ankle one year ago. This was an open fracture and the bone had been poking out through the skin for a year. As a result the majority of her fibula bone was chronically infected.

Her Father had heard that we were working in the hospital and brought her in for us to see her. We were able to operate on her that day.

Unfortunately because of the chronic infection the majority of her fibula bone had to be removed.



Gam Med Plastic surgeons provide an invaluable role both with combined cases with the Orthopaedic team and on their own.

The top-right picture shows a leg that had previously had an open fracture with a significant soft tissue defect leaving the bone exposed to the air and infection. Plastic surgical reconstructive surgery has covered the defect, reducing the chance of infection.

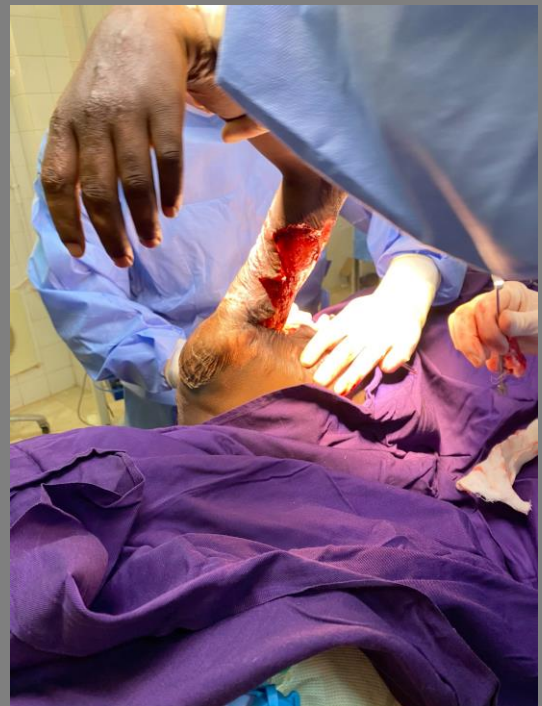
The top-left and bottom pictures show a child who had sustained a burn. The resulting scarring had caused a contracture that meant she was unable to straighten her fingers. Reconstructive surgery was performed to allow her to regain normal hand function.





Burns are all too common in The Gambia. This severe burn caused the upper arm to become stuck to the chest.

Complex plastic surgery was required to release the scar tissue and enable the arm to move freely again.



Our radiologists provided scanning, reporting, teaching and support to radiologists and radiographers as well as identified ways in which radiology services can be improved in the long-term.

Back in the UK they continue to provide support with remote reporting of scans and providing training attachments to Gambian trainees in the UK.





Physiotherapy & rehabilitation support is given. Crutches are often seen as single-use items in the UK & are in short supply in The Gambia. We have sent hundreds of crutches and frames. On the outreach trips we also provide support & training for physiotherapists.





We source kit for the Hospital.

We send out of date and unwanted consumables.

We have donated theatre tables, drills, orthopaedic instruments to name but a few.





There are always challenges for Kebba and his team. As mentioned previously there is only one Trauma & Orthopaedic Unit in the Country. Recently the only functioning C-arm in The Gambia stopped working. This is having a huge impact on the provision of Orthopaedic trauma as they are unable to take x-rays in theatre. Patient care is negatively impacted.

We are working with Spire UK to source a functioning unit as soon as possible.

Any help that be given will be greatly received and have a hugely positive impact on the people of The Gambia.





Any Support you can give will be gratefully received.

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