

Each day we start work at the hospital with morning devotions in the chapel at 7.30am for 15 minutes. A very common prayer to start our worship includes a thanks to God for “seeing the new day as there are many who would have liked to see the day but have not made it”. At first this seemed a bit of a strange prayer, but the more I have lived in Kenya the more natural it seems. Whenever we travel it is customary to pray for journey mercies, safe arrival & a promise that if we do arrive safely all the glory will be given to God. Again, at first this seemed a bit “over the top”, but the more accidents we have seen, the more near misses we have had, the more naturally the prayers come!



A couple of months ago I was walking to my office in the hospital, my mind on so many things that had to be done that day, & suddenly I found myself flat on the concrete floor. I don't know exactly how it happened, but I had fallen & not put my arms out to break the fall & had hit my head, full force, on a concrete drain. Fortunately I had no loss of consciousness & heard some staff around saying “shall we turn her over”. In true doctor mode, face down to the concrete, I said “no this is the best position for recovery”. I could hear a sigh of relief as they realised I was alive, conscious, & orientated! Anyhow, I was packed off for a CT scan of my head, which fortunately was normal. Apart from some whiplash, a small cut on my forehead, & a beautiful coloured face as the bruising came out, no damage was done (but plenty of ‘selfies’ taken to record the bruises progress).



In fact I was carrying 2 laptops, neither of which suffered any damage (perhaps the reason I did not break my fall?). The truth is though, I really did bang my head hard, & I realise the consequences could have been much worse. One minute I was walking along with no other concern than how I was going to organise my day, & the next I was being rushed for a CT scan. Praying for safety & thanking God every morning for seeing another day suddenly seems quite the right thing to be doing. We take so much for granted & being in a situation where we see suffering & misfortune on a daily basis really does help us to put things in perspective & give God all the glory & thanks for what we have, health & safety being on the top of the list!

The last few months have been particularly hectic. I attended the MEDS (Mission for Drugs & Essential Supplies) formulary committee in July as a Palliative Specialist to give input on which drugs to stock & supply to facilities around the country.



The HIV & Palliative care training programmes for health care workers is getting busier. In August we had a planning meeting to discuss next year's teaching timetable. The clinical HIV course was 15 weeks & has now been extended to 18 weeks, & the Pharmacy HIV course from 10 weeks to 13 weeks. However we still have to conduct the same number of courses so it's a bit of a conundrum as to how we fit it all in. In September, national training was being done on updated HIV treatment guidelines & I was invited to Nairobi for 3 days as a NASCOP (National AIDS & STI Control Programme) trainer. This is a great honour as it is an acknowledgement of our training at government level & helps enhance the reputation of our Maua Methodist Hospital. My greatest passion is still for seeing patients, but it is very satisfying to be able to use knowledge & experience to teach others & have the opportunity to promote a high level of care for patients in a much wider sphere than just in our hospital.

On Sunday this week one of our staff was stopped by police for an alleged traffic violation. As he was trying to sort things out he called a more senior officer for assistance. On talking to the gentleman our staff realised the officer, although being very helpful, had a very severe headache & counselled him about treatment. That night the officer decided to come to the hospital for attention & the following morning was referred to me in the HIV clinic. It turned out he was severely sick & I had him admitted & he is now doing well on intravenous treatment for a severe brain infection, cryptococcal meningitis. Whilst attending to her husband, the officer's wife revealed to me she is also has HIV & is pregnant. As a consequence she is now enrolled in our clinic & receiving treatment for herself & to protect the baby from HIV infection. God works in mysterious ways, a family needing urgent treatment coming to our attention through a traffic violation (all charges were dropped – unrelated to our treating the officer). Truly we should give thanks to God at all times & in all situations.