

Voluntary Surgery Mission to the Odonto Maxillo Facial Hospital, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. 12 - 16 June 2017.

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This visit, which took place from Monday 12 June 2017 to Friday 16 June 2017, was the thirteenth annual voluntary surgical team mission that I have led to the Odonto Maxillo Facial Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The hospital is a tertiary referral centre for oral and maxillofacial surgery for the southern half of Vietnam. The hospital has recently commissioned four new operating rooms and we were the first foreign team to use them. The three old ORs are still functioning. The hospital has over 100 beds.

This year's team was comprised ten volunteer members: two oral and maxillofacial surgeons, two plastic and reconstructive surgeons, two anaesthetists, a trainee plastic surgeon, a dentist and two OR nurses (Fig 1). On Monday morning, we screened 105 patients (Fig 2). These patients came from Ho Chi Minh City or the impoverished rural provinces of the southern half of Vietnam. The cases referred to our team were of the more surgically challenging and complex type. The range of cases included old untreated facial fractures, cleft lip and palate deformities, large ameloblastomas for resection and reconstruction, various facial congenital deformities, complex orthognathic surgery cases, post jaw resection deformities for reconstruction, large fibrous dysplasia cases and a range of other extensive pathologies.



Fig 1. Team members of 2017 at the Odonto Maxillo Facial Hospital, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.



Fig 2. Screening clinic, day 1.

During the week, the team operated on 53 cases. Over the thirteen years that our team has worked at the Odonto Maxillo Facial Hospital we have operated on approximately 600 individuals.

We performed surgery all day from Monday afternoon to Friday afternoon. Some procedures were very complex involving up to seven hours of surgery to complete. We were supported by, and worked closely with, the local oral and maxillofacial surgeons and trainees, anaesthetists and nurses. Most of the hospital surgical staff have worked closely with our team members during all our visits to the hospital. The close and collaborative engagement between our team members and the local hospital staff has been a particularly rewarding experience for all (Fig 3 and 4).

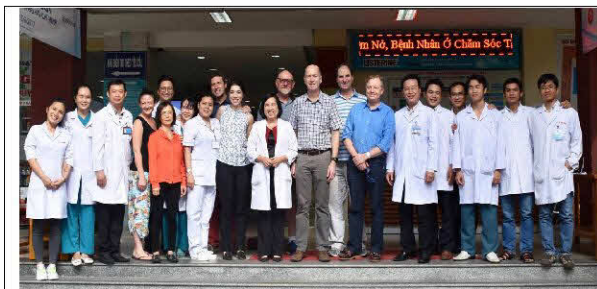


Fig 3. Team members with hospital oral and maxillofacial surgery staff.



Fig 4. In OR working with the local oral and maxillofacial surgery trainees

The procedures performed on all cases were life-changing for each patient. It was particularly rewarding for all team members to experience the expressions of gratitude from all our patients, their families and the hospital staff.

On the last afternoon of our visit the hospital hosted a ceremony of appreciation for the Australian team members.

Our efforts to care for the local patients could not have occurred without the essential contributions of various individuals, companies and associations. All surgical team members were self-funded and donated their time and skills to contribute to the team's work. We received donations of essential equipment and materials from a range of sources including Defries Industries, Epic Pharmacy (Berwick), Johnson and Johnson, KLS Martin, St John of God Hospital Berwick, Teleflex Medical and Waverley Private Hospital. A grant from the Overseas and Outreach Aid Committee of the Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons part funded the costs of the nurse members. Essential surgical and anaesthetic instruments, purchased with grants kindly supplied by ANZAOMS and the International College of Dentists, were used by the team during our visit (Figs 5 and 6).

