

TENWEK HOSPITAL

BOMET, KENYA

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What is the history of Tenwek Hospital,?

Tenwek Hospital is a Christian Hospital founded in 1937 and is located in western Kenya in the town of Bomet. Over the years, the hospital has grown substantially with the help of an American surgeon, named Dr. Ernie Steury and numerous permanent and visiting staff physicians, many of whom are American.

Tenwek Hospital is a 300 bed tertiary referral center-responsible for a population of over 600,000. The hospital sees a wide variety of pathology to include infectious diseases endemic to Kenya. Tenwek Hospital has an internship training program, family medicine residency, and surgical residency programs. Tenwek has 6 operating room suites and a very active endoscopy service.



Tenwek Hospital

Why I chose to go to Tenwek Hospital, Kenya?

The answer to this question dates back to when I was a cadet at the Air Force Academy. I was an instructor pilot in the glider squadron, a physics major and intended on becoming a fighter pilot and dreamed of becoming an astronaut. The summer after my sophomore year, I read a book called “Come Walk With Me” by Mel Cheatum, which was a story about a Kenyan athlete named Stanley. Stanley was diagnosed with metastatic osteosarcoma, which required an above the knee amputation. In the last few months of Stanley’s life, he used a stick to help him hop 7 miles each way to lead a Bible study. I was inspired by Stanley’s story, the miracles at Tenwek Hospital and although I have no physicians in my family, I made the decision to pursue medicine.



Tenwek’s ultrasound technologists, Duncan and Gilbert sit outside the radiology department with the patients.



Radiology Department Tenwek Hospital

What is the Tenwek's radiology department like?

There is no full-time radiologist at Tenwek Hospital, but there is an active radiology department with a total of 80-120 plain radiographs and 40-60 ultrasounds daily. In September 2011, Toshiba America Medical Systems, Inc donated a 4 slice CT scanner. This has revolutionized medical care at Tenwek and has helped save many lives. Current CT volume is 10-15 scans daily. We greatly appreciate Toshiba's generous donation!



Our Chief Technologist, Nicholas, prepares patient for a CT scan on Toshiba's excellent scanner.



One of our technologists, Eric, takes a radiograph.



Our role as radiologists was to train the technologists on both scanning technique and interpretation. When there is no visiting radiologist, the ultrasound technologists provide the final report.

Who were my radiology attendings at Tenwek ?

I worked with two visiting American radiologists, Dr. Chris Lisanti and Dr. Kuhn Hong. Both of whom had served at Tenwek Hospital on prior trips. Dr. Lisanti and I were the first radiologists to arrive since the CT scanner was installed.



Rounding with the medical teams gave insight into the diseases prevalent at Tenwek Hospital. A visit to the pediatric ward to deliver "sweets" or gifts like crayons with coloring books.



Radiology Department Tenwek Hospital

What are some of the lessons I learned?

I am currently a third year radiology resident at University of California, Davis. My experiences at Tenwek have broadened my knowledge base. In Kenya, I saw disease presenting at more advanced stages, numerous neural tube defects and a wide range of infectious diseases including tuberculosis, echinococcal disease and malaria.

Another major lesson was learning to work with limited resources. In the main hospital, there are sometimes two patients to a single bed. There is no isolation for patients with active tuberculosis. Medicine, medical equipment and staff are stretched very thin. The same thing was true in the radiology department. For example, without a fluoroscopy unit, we were forced to perform examinations such as barium swallow examination using plain radiographs alone.

I got a lot of hands on experience helping run a radiology department. For example, I helped Dr. Lisanti set up the initial set of protocols for the CT scanner. I also helped educate the radiology department on recognition and management of contrast reactions.

I also developed greater appreciation for healthcare and radiology in America where we are so fortunate to have diagnostic tools such as MRI and nuclear medicine.

Thank you!

I am grateful to the ACR Foundation for the Goldberg-Reeder scholarship, which has allowed me to have a tremendous learning experience in Kenya. My one month trip was outstanding and I hope to take similar trips in the future.



Minimally invasive techniques offered by our visiting radiology team. Here, I was teaching one of the general surgery residents how to perform an ultrasound guided liver biopsy of a hypoechoic liver mass, which was found to be Tuberculosis.



I am sitting with Tenwek's outstanding team of radiology technicians including Nicolas, Ronald, Eric, David, Cornelius, Me, Gilbert and Samuel. (from left to right)

