Development of the first paediatric nursing course in Zambia

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Brighton-Lusaka Health Charity Link
This presentation will outline the journey over the last 2 years from initial discussions in 2010 concerning developing the first paediatric nursing course in Zambia, to the recent successful award of £30,000 from THET to support the delivery of the course in 2013.
The Brighton-Lusaka Health Link was set up in 2005 by Professor Melanie Newport in partnership with the Brighton and Sussex Medical School, the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust, the University Teaching Hospital Lusaka and the School of Nursing in Lusaka.

The Link has been involved in several projects involving HIV, ophthalmology and Advanced Paediatric Life Support. In 2007 the School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Brighton became a partner in the Link and in collaboration with the Lusaka School of Nursing supported the successful establishment of the first critical care nursing (CCN) course in Zambia in 2012.
Left (bottom row) Alison Taylor, Paediatric Practice Development Nurse at Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust; and Jill Durrant (second from right, bottom row), with UTH nursing students on the first critical care course which completed in January 2013
Brighton-Lusaka Health Charity Link

- The Lusaka School of Nursing, Zambia the School of Nursing and Midwifery, University of Brighton and the Brighton-Lusaka Health Charity Link are collaborating on a project to develop and establish a sustainable paediatric nurse advanced diploma course in Zambia.

- This project will be driven by local nurses in-country and has been realised by the funding support of the Tropical Health Education Trust (THET) and a generous donation by a local business man.
The University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in Lusaka is the largest hospital and main referral health institution in Zambia. It has 1655 beds; 355 are paediatric beds within the children’s wing with 20,000 – 30,000 paediatric admissions per year.

UTH is the main medical training institution in Zambia for doctors, nurses, clinical officers and other health professionals and provides primary, secondary and tertiary care. It has a catchment population of approximately 2 million people.
A scoping visit to UTH in 2011 by Jill and Susanne facilitated by Eric Chisupa (Paediatric Principal tutor at the Lusaka School of Nursing) highlighted the need to develop a paediatric nursing course.

The development of the first paediatric nursing course in Zambia stems from the need to further enhance and strengthen the skills and knowledge base of front line nurses caring for some of the most vulnerable infants and children in Zambia.
Development of a Paediatric Nurse workforce is crucial to improving child survival in acute clinical areas.

Latest WHO figures from 2011 estimated under 5 mortality rates as 83 per 1000 live births and 53 per 1000 live births for infant (UNICEF 2012).

Compounding these statistics is the fact that Zambia has a dire shortage of health workers; less than a third of the doctor patient ratio and half the nurses recommended by WHO (2010).
The results of an audit completed by a UK paediatrician Dr Paul Seddon and the head of paediatrics at UTH Dr WaSomwe in 2008 identified that of those children dying following admission to UTH, 63% occurred within the first 48 hours and staff expressed a lack of confidence in dealing with acutely ill children.

The development of the first paediatric nursing course in Zambia aims to further enhance and strengthen the skills and knowledge base of front line nurses caring for some of the most vulnerable infants and children in Zambia.
Main activities of the project

- To strengthen the capacity of tutors to deliver a quality assured educational programme

- To support the application of evidence based knowledge into practice by nurses through mentorship support.
Main aims of the paediatric nursing course

- To build capacity in paediatric nursing care from the newborn through to adolescence. Evidence suggests that most hospital staff do not have access to national or international guidelines and that effective teaching, especially skills, requires effective instructors/facilitators, who must therefore themselves be trained and quality assured, in contrast to the informal ward based training;
Students on the first critical care course in Zambia having neonatal life support training in the skills room within the Lusaka School of Nursing, UTH.
To provide opportunities for career development and lifelong learning and nurses will therefore be encouraged to remain working in Zambia promoting retention, expanding the health care workforce and improving the wellbeing of nurses;
Provide quality assured learning and assessment processes for nursing and medical students on paediatric placements. Paediatric nurses successfully completing the paediatric course will act as mentors to students and be role models in delivering a high standard of evidence-based nursing care to children and young people and their families;
Enable paediatric nurses to be professional partners with other disciplines, particularly demonstrating leadership and change management skills in working with the medical team;
Strengthen education and health systems to ‘scale up’ delivery of safe, accessible and high quality care to children and young people admitted to hospital. It is widely recognised that inadequate health systems are major barriers to improved newborn and child survival and achieving the MDG 4 is a key challenge for African countries (African Health Strategy 2015).
There is commitment by the Zambian government to support nurses to undertake the year long course which will continue to be delivered every year for 20-30 students.

The course will initially be delivered in Lusaka but close partnership working with Ndola will provide the opportunity for the course to be delivered at other centres in the future.

The students during the course will be offered the opportunity to skype/email children’s nurses in the UK who are undertaking post-registration study, to share reflections and experiences of clinical practice.
Eric Chisupa: Acting Principal tutor for paediatrics, Lusaka School of Nursing

“For so many years our children in Zambia have been managed by general nurses and midwives, and this has, in some cases, resulted in them not receiving the best care. With the coming of the paediatric nursing course we are certain that the children will benefit and the country will benefit too”
Looking to the future

- The paediatric nursing course will run annually for 20-30 students endorsed by the General Nursing Council (GNC) and successful students will be registered as Paediatric Nurses.

- The long term goal is for there to be a paediatric practice educator in every hospital in Zambia and that these educators will be supported to maintain up to date evidence-based practice by the provision of an annual paediatric nursing conference.
Thank you