

IVUMED TRAVELING RESIDENT SCHOLAR REPORT

May Jean Councilman, MD

Fort Portal & Mbale, Uganda: November 2019

Mentor: Eric Richter, MD

Sponsored by: Mid-Atlantic Section of the AUA

The generous support of the Mid-Atlantic Section of the American Urological Association made it possible for Dr. May Jean Councilman to serve as an IVU Resident Scholar in Fort Portal & Mbale, Uganda under the mentorship of Dr. Eric Richter.

Dr. Councilman shares her experience:



“Participating in international medicine and surgery has been a goal of mine since I first started the long road of training in medicine. Luckily with the support of IVU, during my 5th year of residency I went on a two-week trip to Uganda. With the leadership of Dr. Eric Richter, we worked with local Ugandan urologist Dr. Fred Kirya and arranged a week at Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital in Fort Portal, followed by a week at Mount Elgon Hospital in Mbale.

“While we were in Fort Portal, we had a large team of support, including the urology team as mentioned, American anesthesiologist Dr. Edward Cobb, local general surgeon Dr. Edwin Musinguzi, multiple medical staff officers, anesthetists, OR nurses and medical students. Having so much local support allowed us to run two tables a day with 8-10 cases a day. There were a range of cases including TURPs, TURBTs, urethroplasties, open simple prostatectomies, chordee repairs, and hydrocelectomies.

Postoperatively, the patients were frequently admitted on continuous bladder irrigation which was typically monitored by the patient’s own family with purchased saline bottles. To my surprise, no one developed infections, required transfusions post operatively, or barely even complained of bladder spasms! At the end of the week with a well-deserved day off, Dr. Cobb, Dr. Richter and I went on a beautiful hike tracking chimpanzees in Kibale National Park and ended the evening with a large celebratory group dinner with the staff and faculty from Fort Portal’s hospital.





“Our second week we traveled across the country on an 8-hour drive to Mbale where Dr. Kirya practices and operates. Mount Elgon Hospital is a private hospital (as opposed to the free government-run hospital we were in at Fort Portal) and ran at a little slower pace which was a welcome respite after the first busy week. This allowed for more time for teaching – we worked closely with Dr. Kirya’s new partner, a newly minted urologist Dr. Joseph Epodoi, who recently finished a urology fellowship in Tanzania and returned to Uganda to practice. We also worked alongside and taught a general surgeon who was hoping to

eventually enter a pediatric urology fellowship. On some of the slower days, we enjoyed team lunches and dinner (with lots of delicious African tea and coffee), toured the local markets & shops and even went on an afternoon waterfall hike at the nearby Sipi Falls. Despite the slower pace, we still accomplished an additional 18 cases that were similar in variety to Fort Portal.

“On our last two days of the trip, Dr. Richter, Dr. Kirya and I traveled to the capital Kampala to meet with the urology residency at Kampala to discuss future ventures and partnerships with IVU. In Kampala and previously in Fort Portal, I gave several lectures to general surgery residents, urology fellows and medical students, discussing topics such as noninvasive and muscle-invasive bladder cancer, surgical stone treatment, and posterior urethral valves.



“Looking back on the trip, I am grateful for so many things. In terms of surgical experience, I benefitted myself greatly from doing open prostatectomies with Dr. Kirya, since this is not a common practice anymore in the U.S. I also enjoyed teaching the local surgeons and medical officers how to do TURPs, since for many of them, it was their first exposure to endoscopic technology and using a resectoscope.

I was reminded that I am lucky to have plentiful resources and technology practicing medicine in the US, and thinking of alternative options and solutions is truly a skill the physicians in Uganda have mastered.

“My two weeks in Uganda flew by, and by the time I got to the airport, my mind was already spinning trying to plan a future trip! I was re-inspired in the field of urology and medicine, which is sometimes forgotten in the trenches of residency. I made lifelong friends and memories with this trip, and cannot thank IVU enough for sponsoring me as a resident scholar, and my program at Thomas Jefferson University for not only allowing but encouraging such an experience.”

