

Nicci's Update from Uganda – March 2021

Dear family and friends

February flew by!

Work-wise – We are almost back to pre-lockdown patient numbers in outpatients. That's good news, especially for the medical centre finances. We had some really challenging patients on the ward and special care was full, almost to bursting, with its fair share of challenging patients throughout the month. My government hospital days are continuing to be enjoyable and productive and I seem to be building some useful working relationships there.

I've been visiting our nearest Batwa (Pygmy) village – the Batwa were displaced from their traditional forest homes in the early 1990's to make way for gorilla conservation and are a very marginalized and deprived community. This month we launched a healthcare outreach to the local Batwa community with financial support from an Australian church. I will be involved in health education/outreach to the village on a monthly basis and community members will be able to receive "free at the point of use" care at Potter's Village if they are ill. This is really exciting, especially as it has been in the planning stages since before Covid happened.

I've been hoping to do some visits and teaching in other local health facilities and this seems to be taking shape nicely too. I'll be doing a teaching session next week for midwifery staff at one of the more distant health centres in our area. We will be talking about how to care for sick or premature newborns before referral so that they arrive in better condition in order to promote better recovery.

Covid news – Case numbers in Uganda appear to be very low at the moment and compliance with precautions is almost non-existent in the community. We heard today that the Astra Zeneca vaccine is going to be rolled out to health workers and security personnel from 10th March! Hurrah! I have to limit my excitement by reminding myself that lateral flow testing was apparently rolled out nearly 2 months ago and we haven't seen any tests yet!

Non-work things – I enjoyed a quiet weekend near the Bwindi forest. It was wonderful to just spend time on my own, read a book and enjoy the incredible peace and quiet.

We were all delighted to get social media access back a couple of weeks ago, although Facebook apparently remains blocked. I think most of the population now has access to a VPN to get around the block though!

Jovia and Dan – Thank you to everyone who has let us know that they are praying for Jovia and Dan. Huge thanks too, to those who have felt moved to make a financial contribution to the costs of Dan's care – that was unexpected but most welcome. Jovia was almost in tears when I told her how many people were supporting her practically and in prayer.

Dan's CT scan was reassuring but he is in increasing amounts of pain. He is admitted in our regional referral hospital in Mbarara and we are hopeful that we will have a clear diagnosis and treatment plan soon. I'll keep you updated!

Keeping in touch – I'm still trying to blog once a week (www.niccimaxwell.wordpress.com). Feel free to keep in touch by email, WhatsApp or Zoom.

Love to you all,

Nicci



Beautiful Bwindi Forest

For your prayers

Give thanks for:

- *Encouraging progress in developing outreach activities to both patients and health workers.*
- *Hopes of a Covid vaccine for health workers in the near future.*
- *A relaxing weekend away.*

Please pray for:

- *Jovia and her son Dan as they seek clarity about his diagnosis and that he might be able to write his very important school exams at the end of the month.*
- *Ongoing protection for our team from Covid19 and for the vaccine roll out to happen efficiently and without corruption.*
- *Safe travel and effective teaching in my outreach to health centres.*