

Visit to Themba Hospital, Mpumalanga, South Africa

24 April 2009 – 16 May 2009

By

Prof John Templeton

The time spent at Themba was most valuable and gave a great insight into the practice of medicine in this area. I attended Theatre, Rounds, Clinics and Educational Meetings.

The clinics were very busy with over 100 patients being seen by several doctors between 10am and 4pm one day per week.

The clinic was held in the Physiotherapy department in rather cramped conditions. However I felt that the standard of practice was high.

Operating sessions were held on 2 days per week Monday and Thursday. 3 operating rooms were available each day running from 8am till 4pm. This was not really sufficient time to deal with the large volume of trauma patients admitted. This resulted in considerable delays in getting patients to surgery thereby making surgery time longer and more difficult to perform. However the standard of operating was very high.

The theatres were very well equipped with modern equipment eg IM nails, AO instrumentation and 2 Image Intensifiers etc. Rounds were held on Wednesday mornings and again on Friday mornings.

Teaching rounds were held on Wednesday mornings at 8 am and were well attended.

Mortality and Morbidity rounds were held on Mondays at 8am for one hour prior to theatre. These were extremely well attended with good discussion.

I visited Rob Ferreira Hospital in Nelspruit and attended a Ward Round with Dr Kevin Stein who was most welcoming. Again large numbers of trauma patients waiting for surgery. I gave a number of talks at both hospitals focusing on trauma topics.

I found myself very busy every weekday from early morning to late afternoon.

It became very clear that Prof Ken Rankin had put immense effort into both hospitals over the years with regards to all matters including staffing and instrumentation. It was very obvious that he was held in very high regard by all his staff. Dr John Lodder gave enormous support from the time we arrived until we left. He found a Volunteer job for my wife at the local hospice at White River which made her as busy as myself. He accompanied us into the Kruger Park on two occasions at weekends and gave invaluable advice on many occasions.

Our accommodation at Raedowns was excellent and only a ten minutes drive from Themba hospital.

Overall I found the visit very rewarding and I can highly recommend Mpumalanga to the WOC membership.