



Interplast[®]

Repairing bodies & rebuilding lives
in the Asia Pacific region

SUPPORTER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT REPORT

Lao Anaesthetic & Pain Management Training in Melbourne

Bridge the Gap Foundation

Recognising Your Impact

As a valued partner of Interplast Australia & New Zealand, your generosity and support directly benefited developing communities across the Asia Pacific region by working with us to provide the necessary funds to support two anaesthetists from Laos to build their knowledge and skills in pain management by undertaking a three-week observational placement at the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (Peter Mac) in Australia.

Thank you for your dedication to changing futures.

This report provides a brief overview of the positive impact made possible through your involvement.

Following the success of this program, Interplast will continue to increase our reach; providing patients with life-changing medical procedures that they would otherwise not be able to access, while building the capacity of medical staff through a combination of formal training and professional mentoring.

We hope that you are able to continue supporting us on this journey.

As you will see from this report, the program you supported was a highly successful one and will have both immediate and long-lasting positive outcomes for the people of the Asia Pacific region.

We cannot thank you enough for your assistance.

If you would like any further information about the program, or how your funding was used to repair bodies and rebuild lives please contact Interplast at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Prue Ingram

Chief Executive Officer
Interplast Australia & New Zealand



A Significant Need

INTERPLAST IN LAOS:

Interplast, in partnership with Mahosot Hospital, has been sending volunteer teams annually to Laos since 1996. The focus for Interplast in Laos was originally training the local staff in the techniques of cleft repair, and, as their skills developed, this evolved into training on burns management.

While the Lao Government regards health as a basic right in the constitution and rights to healthcare are enshrined in national law, the current level of government spending on the sector is only 6% of the national budget. This means that out-of-pocket spending is the largest source of funding for the sector. The other source of funding is Non-Governmental organisations (NGOs) and donors.

Dr Vanpheng Norasingh and Dr Boualy Vannavong are joint Deputy Heads of Anaesthesia at Mahosot Hospital and have worked closely with the Interplast team for a number of years.



Dr Vanpheng and Dr Boualy are proud to be paving the way in anaesthesia in Laos, having already made great strides in the pursuit of safer surgery and pain management since they began working together in 2002. Together they have embedded pain management in the curriculum for medical students, including subjects such as the use of opioids (e.g. morphine), epidural and other types of anaesthesia for short- and long-term pain management, as well as to enable extended surgeries for complex operations.



ABOUT THE PLACEMENT:

The Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre (Peter Mac) is one of the world's leading cancer research, education and treatment centres globally and is Australia's only public hospital solely dedicated to caring for people affected by cancer. Dr Vanpheng and Dr Boualy had heard about Peter Mac from the Interplast volunteers and identified it as an ideal place for them to continue to develop their knowledge and skills in relation to pain management.

Dr Vanpheng and Dr Boualy arrived in Melbourne in early August to begin their placement. There was some initial delay on this arrival due to the complex immunisation compliance requirements of overseas medical personnel, and the difficulties obtaining some of these immunisations in Laos.

The purpose of the placement was to increase the knowledge and skills of the two visiting anaesthetists in the treatment of pain in oncological patients. It was seven years ago that Dr Vanpheng and Dr Boualy set up Laos' first pain management clinic. Prior to this, pain management for patients was only available in the recovery room. Not only does the clinic now service the whole hospital, but also the whole province, something they are both very proud of.

The next goal, according to Dr Vanpheng and Dr Boualy, is to train other staff at Mahosot so that they can set up pain management clinics in other provinces in the hopes that pain management will one day be available to all those in need across the country.

The first two days of the placement corresponded with the Asia Pacific – Advanced Haemodynamic Monitoring & Perioperative Medicine Symposium held at Peter Mac with a number of other international attendees. The presentations covered a range of topics including acute pain, perioperative advance case planning and the role of the multidisciplinary team meeting which both anaesthetists reported they found informative and interesting. The remainder of the placement involved the anaesthetists shadowing the Peter Mac pain team for ICU and ward rounds observing tasks such as patient pain scoring, monitoring levels of epidural with catheter lines and testing levels of paresthesia, calibrating IV infusions and syringe pumps and discussions about the various types, dosages and effects of narcotics that are used in pain management.

In addition to this, they spent time in the operating theatre observing the epidural block technique as well as the technique of anaesthesia without inhalation (no desflurane, no sevoflurane) and time working with the palliative team on the Outpatient Disease unit.

Both anaesthetists felt welcomed by the team at Peter Mac and, in particular, felt they benefited from participating in the meetings of pain and palliative care team when they shared experiences and discussed the pain management of particular patients. They are optimistic about opportunities to integrate their learnings into their practise at Mahosot and to educate their colleagues.

From Peter Mac...

"I enjoyed having Vanpheng & Boualy visit Peter Mac...When we did the pain rounds together, they were quite inquisitive and engaging. We also had coffee afterwards and learnt about each other's health care system...I enjoyed their visit and would encourage future exchanges."

*Dr. Jason Chou
Consultant in Anaesthesia & Pain Medicine*

THE FUTURE OF PAIN MANAGEMENT IN LAOS

Both anaesthetists were very excited by what they had observed and learnt during their time at Peter Mac. Dr Vanpheng reported that she plans to meet with the Head of Pharmacy at Mahosot to discuss ordering different kinds of narcotics including Methadone, Hydromorphone, Oxycodone, Fentanyl patches and Norspan patches.

The most important next step, according to both anaesthetists, is to train their peers at Mahosot, and elsewhere in Laos. This includes the younger and less experienced anaesthetists including specialist students and also the nurses working on post-operative ward care, particularly in the use of equipment such as syringe pumps and IV infusions.

THANK YOU TO BRIDGE THE GAP

For your partnership with Interplast in our work to repair bodies and rebuild lives across the Asia Pacific region.

With sincere thanks...

“I am now a specialist in pain management, particularly in acute, chronic and cancer pain, as well as intervention in theatre.”

*Dr Boualy Vannavong
Anaesthetist, Mahosot Hospital*



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