



Report Mission in Myanmar 2016 – Yangon Eye Hospital

February 7th till March 14th 2016

Our second mission took place from 7–14 February 2016 in cooperation with the chief physician Prof. Tin Win and his entire team at the Yangon Eye Hospital (YEH). The YEH is the country's largest public hospital for eye care and treatment and offers a range of services in various medical fields within ophthalmology.

Since this was the Saint Lucy Foundation's first project in Myanmar, our primary goal was to become familiar with the local conditions. To do so, we thoroughly analyzed the local medical infrastructure and exchanged information with local doctors to assess the level of knowledge and expertise available and gain an in-depth understanding of patient needs. We also met with the Swiss ambassador Paul Seger as well as with the distinguished medical officer of various European embassies in Myanmar, Dr. Olivier Cattin. In addition to fulfilling our foundation's mission to treat the impoverished visually impaired, restore their eyesight and train the local staff, we also added another component to the mission. Thanks to support and assistance of Andreas Dostmann of Oertli Instrumente AG, Berneck, we were able to upgrade equipment to a modern level through maintenance and replacement parts and instruct the local surgery nurses on how to use the individual instruments.

Before the start of the mission, Prof. Tin Win and his team recruited destitute patients who had been diagnosed with a cataract for treatment. All of the patients were given a detailed examination (including assessment of their eyesight and eye pressure, ultrasound biometrics, etc.). Once we arrived at the YEH, our Swiss doctors thoroughly examined the patients a second time with slit lamps together with the local assisting doctors. The type of surgery required (phacoemulsification or extra-capsular cataract extraction [ECCE]), the expected complications during the procedure and the type of anesthesia to be used were determined based on the results of these examinations.

The Saint Lucy Foundation also imported the necessary surgical instruments and the intraocular lenses for the phacoemulsification. If anything was missing or subsequently needed, we were always able to count on the professional support of the local distributor, Vision Care, under the leadership of Hnin Hnin Aye and her team. The surgical procedures were carried out with the on-site phacoemulsification device and with the portable CataRhex 3 device we brought with us. In this way, the doctors were able to operate next to each other and at the same time. The operating room was simple and functionally furnished, providing a sterile environment for the operations. In total, the Swiss doctors successfully operated on 54 patients in three days, with additional procedures completed by local specialists with the instruction of our doctors.



After each surgery, every patient was called in for a follow-up examination on the day after the procedure. During these appointments, the Swiss doctors were able to make sure the procedures were successful and ensure that the right medications had been prescribed and administered. Knowledge transfer is a central issue for the Saint Lucy Foundation, which we addressed by holding specialist presentations in the various areas of expertise of our doctors.

We randomly selected two patients to visit in their home along with the entire delegation. Both visits, despite the utter poverty in which the patients live, were full of gratitude and heartfelt gestures. As a small gift, we gave the patients reading glasses and some Swiss chocolate.

In conclusion, we have found that for a first mission at a new location, the combination of surgical procedures, training local staff, repairing equipment and providing assistance yielded impressive results. With the second mission at this location next year, we hope to intensify the contacts gained, further establish our areas of expertise and lend greater focus to the transfer of knowhow. Ultimately, it is our stated goal to enable all local doctors to treat their fellow citizens themselves. By applying all our resources, we are sure to be successful in enabling the many needy people of Myanmar to see a significant improvement in their quality of life.