

This past August 2023, an inaugural mission trip to Bugando Medical Center in Mwanza, Tanzania. It was led by Manoj Abraham, MD and Dane Barrett, MD, Bugando Medical Center is a tertiary referral hospital in Mwanza, Tanzania. It serves a catchment area of 18 million, approximately one-third of Tanzania's total population. This site was considered due to its collaborative history with the Duke Global Cancer Initiative wherein physicians from multiple specialties including medical oncology, internal medicine, pediatrics, and radiation oncology have participated in many well-established clinical programs to date. We were fortunate to have been connected with Francis Tegete, MD, the sole plastic and reconstructive surgery faculty at Bugando Medical Center, and his otolaryngology colleagues through Kristin Schroeder, MD, a fellowship trained pediatric oncologist on faculty at Duke University Medical Center and the Duke Global Health Institute. She has spent six or more months per year at Bugando Medical Center since 2014 doing tremendous work advancing pediatric and oncologic care.

Our HTCNE team included a total of 21 volunteers including physicians such as surgeons, anesthesiologists, and hospitalists, as well as speech language pathologists, nurses, scrub techs, and team administrators. We worked side by side with Bugando Medical Center personnel from the plastics and otolaryngology subspecialties including faculty, trainees, and ancillary staff to provide care to patients from all over the country. We screened a total of 50 patients, 25 of whom were cleared for surgery, and performed over 55 procedures during the course of our four full surgical days.

Procedures included primary and revision cases of cleft lip repair and palatoplasty, placement of tissue expanders, congenital mass debulking or excisions, complex scar revisions, and repairs of large auricular and nasal defects using various flap and graft techniques. Our daily routine also included morning grand rounds didactics with facial plastics lectures led by both the HTCNE and local Tanzanian teams as well as an organized advanced suture lab session for the trainees focused on local flap reconstructive techniques. Establishing a rapport with the local team was effortless and friendships grew out of the mutual respect and admiration we shared for each other. We were immensely encouraged by the enthusiasm from our hosts to nurture a collaborative environment for the exchange of knowledge and surgical experience.

#### Perspectives from trainees:

*Debbie Pan, MD (PGY-4 Otolaryngology Resident at Duke University)* - I feel extremely grateful for the opportunity to have been able to travel with my attending and mentor, Dane Barrett, MD on this exploratory trip to Bugando Medical Center. It was both daunting and exciting to be a part of this trip as the hope of establishing a new collaborative facial plastics surgical partnership was predicated on the continuing years of impactful work out of the Duke Global Health Institute. It was humbling to work alongside this amazing team of dedicated volunteers with HTCNE and learn from leaders in the field. I was able to see and participate in complex cases I would have not otherwise seen during residency training. The level of collaboration that was sincerely pursued by both teams was also inspiring and left no doubt that this trip had a positive global impact on trainees, staff, faculty, and patients alike. I believe this experience has personally challenged me to be more intentional with how to center my future career goals in facial plastics and develop skills and knowledge to meaningfully serve others.

*Solomon Husain, MD (FPRS Fellow at Mount Sinai School of Medicine)* - This was among the most unique and fulfilling experiences in my medical training. It was an honor to work alongside incredibly talented surgeons in Tanzania, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this trip. Our team, led by Dr. Manoj Abraham, performed complex reconstructions for pathology that would otherwise be rare to encounter during fellowship training in the United States. Faced with such complexity, I was challenged to become a more creative surgeon. We had a week-long exchange of ideas with the Tanzanian team. I had the opportunity to teach the residents and medical students in lectures and wet labs. This trip was truly a collaborative experience focused on teaching and caring for complex patients. Although this was my first international surgical trip, it will certainly not be my last!



Dr. Abraham, Dr. Husain, Dr. Barrett, and Dr. Pan walking local Tanzanian surgical team through reconstructive procedures.







**The Facial Plastics team at Bugando Medical Center led by  
(shown left to right, front row) Dr. Tegete, Dr. Dougherty, Dr. Abraham, and Dr. Barrett**