

Early Management of Severe Trauma in Samoa

Disaster can be a painful time though also a time to recognise opportunities. An Early Management of Severe Trauma Course (EMST) was conducted in Samoa in September 2010



Professor Phil Truskett
Chair, EMST committee

In September 2009, a devastating tsunami in the Pacific struck several island nations. The most severely affected area was along the southern coast of Upolu, the main island of Samoa, where over 100 people lost their lives and many others suffered trauma and injury.

This region was remote from Samoa's main hospital in Apia; consequently medical and other resources were not readily available. Many of the islands' 40 or so registered medical practitioners were pressed into service that day to help with the recovery and treatment of victims, often with minimal resources at their disposal.

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Trauma (EMST) course to be provided for the local medical community who had shown interest in EMST after a number of Samoan doctors had attended the course in Fiji.

As the EMST course is designed to teach lifesaving skills with minimal resources, particularly in the first few hours after trauma, it was seen to be highly beneficial in providing medical practitioners with additional trauma management skills. With this in mind, a request was made to the Pacific Development Unit (PDU) in New Zealand to see if an EMST course could be run in Apia.

Funding became available as a consequence of the relief effort and particularly by a charitable donation from BUPA Healthcare, providing the means to make the course a reality.

Several volunteers that had put their names forward to instruct on the course headed out a few days early. This provided the opportunity for faculty to see the proposed venue and to set up and plan the course to ensure it ran smoothly and also to head off around the

island where faculty were able to see some of the worst hit areas for themselves.

In Samoa, there was high media interest in the course with articles and pictures appearing in the local press. The course was arranged to take place around the anniversary of the tsunami itself and was held at the Oceania University of Medicine (OUM) which had kindly cut lectures for three days to allow us to utilise the lecture room, lab and various other areas for the course.

Nearly all of the 16 participants had been involved in the aftermath of the tsunami and their stories were fascinating. They ranged in speciality from General and Orthopaedic surgery through to Gynaecology and Paediatrics and out to Private General Practitioners.

We ran the course in its standard two and a half day format with a combination of inter-active lectures and practical skill stations with some slight modifications to the program to take into account the local environment and available resources.

For example, Samoa doesn't have a blood bank or a fully equipped Intensive Care Unit. Their splints tend to be bamboo sticks rather than full traction splints and things like FAST scanning and embolisation are just not available.

The most relevant final day scenarios for the local environment were selected; the hypothermia case was modified for example! Medical student volunteers acted as patient models for the cases and the faculty applied the moulage make up themselves – it was worryingly good in some cases!

The participants genuinely enjoyed the course and they all seemed to get a tremendous amount out of it. The course and faculty dinners were well attended and we were privileged to hear some of the harmonious singing for which the Samoans are renowned. The course catering was some of the most impressive I have seen as was the amount that the participants managed to get through.

In a single course, a good proportion of the Samoan medical fraternity has now participated in the EMST experience. The course was a valuable and enriching experience for all involved, broadening the horizons of faculty and participants alike and providing new skills and insights into trauma management.

With Mark Sanders, EMST Course Director

TINNITUS MANAGEMENT SEMINARS FOR 2011

Tinnitus Association of Victoria (TAV) will again be conducting tinnitus management seminars in 2011.

These 2 1/2 hour seminars will be held on the following Sundays at 10am:

**February 13 • April 10 • June 12
August 14 • October 9 • December 11**

The seminars are designed to provide tinnitus sufferers with the necessary knowledge and understanding to become successful tinnitus managers.

We appreciate the time constraints ENT's experience when dealing with deeply distressed tinnitus patients, and believe that the TAV's seminars would provide an excellent follow up where your evaluations exclude any treatable medical condition.

During the last ten years these seminars have gained increasing credibility within the medical profession:

“The TAV stands out as an exceptional and effective support service. This group provides services and support that no other group is able to provide to tinnitus sufferers in our community.”

Janette Thorburn, Principal Audiologist – Voucher Australian Hearing

“The TAV website is internationally recognised as an important source of quality information materials that are well balanced, unbiased and soundly based. They have a dedicated team of volunteer educators and informal counsellors who provide an extremely valuable service through the tinnitus management seminars and telephone support service.”

**Dr. Ross Dineen
Dineen and Westcott Audiology**

Venue: Deaf Children Australia
Address: Cnr St Kilda Rd & High St, Prahran
Time: 10:00am – 12:30pm
Cost: \$50 Concession \$35

Registration available on line
www.tinnitus.org.au

or by phoning:

**Ross McKeown (03) 9729 3125
Ian Paterson (03) 9755 2238**

**TINNITUS
ASSOCIATION
Victoria**