

Operation Rainbow – April 2011 Lapu-Lapu Hospital, Cebu City, Philippines



Team Members

Wilma Dunne – OAM – Mission Coordinator/Ward
Mark Lee – Plastic Surgeon
Mark Hanikeri – Plastic Surgeon
Andrew Olney – Anaesthetist
Ben Hallett – Paediatric Anaesthetist
Kate Marek – Registered Nurse/Anaesthesia
Meg Twine – Registered Nurse/Theatre
Jennie Nichols – Registered Nurse/Theatre
Jillian Back – Registered Nurse/Theatre
Patrick Loftus-Hills – Non medical volunteer
Florida Cue – Non medical volunteer



The majority of the team flew in to Cebu City on 9 April where we met up with Wilma Dunne who had been in the Philippines for the previous four days setting up for the mission. We also met up with Patrick Loftus-Hills who was a non medical volunteer for the mission and flew down from Hong Kong. We acclimatised for the first day and met members of the Kiwanis Club of the Philippines who are major sponsors of the missions. They treated us to a very nice dinner on our first night.



The next day we attended the Lapu-Lapu Hospital which is on the Mactan Island part of Cebu City. This is a small and very basic hospital with one operating room. Anaesthetic and nursing staff setup the operating theatre with all of the equipment whilst myself and Mark Hanikeri ran a clinic. We saw 165 children on the first day. All children were assessed by one of the anaesthetists, Ben Hallett, and also had pre-operative photographs taken and their details taken down. There were a number of children that were either too old for palate repairs or unwell for an operation or too young for a cleft lip or palette repair and would be done at following missions.



We began operating that afternoon on patients just under local anaesthesia and over the next five days operated on around 80 children with cleft lips and palettes. Some of these included revisionary surgery on people who had had previous cleft lip surgery in the past. Thankfully we had no major complications with any of our children however one of our nursing staff did suffer an electric shock from the hospital's autoclave and has required some medical assistance since. Hopefully she will be fine in the long run.



It was a wonderful and rewarding trip with good results and no major problems but it is sobering to realise that there were more children born with cleft lips in the week that we were in Cebu than cases that we performed. I hope to continue more missions to the Philippines with Operation Rainbow in the future.

