Report on BAPS 58th Congress Held in Belfast Northern Ireland from 19th to 22nd July 2011

BAPS is British Association of Paediatric Surgeons. The association was founded in 1953. Its objectives are the advancement of study, practice and research in surgery for children to cultivate professional relations with paediatric surgeons overseas.

The primary aim of BAPS is to set the standards of care of paediatric surgical practice in the UK and Ireland. Part of their strategic objectives include; the support of Paediatric Surgical Practice and The advancement of study, practice and research in Paediatric Surgery. As part of the strategy to achieve its objectives, BAPS offers 2 scholarships every year to paediatric surgeons and trainees from developing countries to attend their annual congress. I was privileged to be one of the recipients for 2011 overseas scholarship, thus an invitation to attend their 58th Congress in Belfast.

The conference was held at the Waterfront Hall in Belfast. Each day the programme run from 8:30 am to 5 pm crowned with a social evening. About 90 scientific papers were presented and 4 key note addresses given by some of the leaders in paediatric surgery on the controversial or cutting edge issues in paediatric surgery. This included foetal surgery, laparoscopic surgery and safety in surgery. The scientific papers covered subjects in basic sciences, urology, general paediatrics and safety in surgery. There were also exhibition of medical products by the sponsors that included text books, theatre instruments and other theatre equipment. The conference was attended by about 400 paediatric surgeons from all over the world. One of the highlights of the conference was the awarding of the Dennis Brown prize to our very own, Professor A J W Millar. In his acceptance speech, he acknowledged his colleagues both former and current in the paediatric surgery department at Red Cross Hospital, outlined his journey to where he is now and of course acknowledged his dear wife's input in his entire journey. He was given a standing ovation at the end. The last day of the conference was crowned with a dinner at the Stormont, the parliament building of Northern Ireland.
Some of the issues I learnt from the conference on addition to the scientific knowledge included;

- Hard work, patience and perseverance eventually yield fruit. This was evidenced in some of the best presentations made, the keynote addresses and the acceptance speech of Prof Millar.
- The best presentation is one that the audience understands. It is easier for the audience to understand once the presenter has understood the subject.
- Team work/ multidisciplinary approach to management of major clinical conditions offers the patient the best and safest with the resources available. Each member of the team is a great resource that should be utilized.

Listening to the different presentations generated some ideas in areas of research that I hope to engage myself in both here at Red Cross Hospital and when I return home to Uganda. I hope to do this as part of my follow up of BAPS.

Last but not least; I enjoyed the journey and the sightseeing and had opportunity in making contact with different people both in paediatric surgery and outside paediatric surgery.

I would therefore like to thank African Paediatric Fellowship Foundation (APFP) very much for providing me with a return air ticket to the conference. It was very timely and relevant for me as I begin my career in paediatric surgery.

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