



REPORT ON

MR. GOWA'S VISIT TO

GHANA

January 2022

Mr. Thomas Gowa is the current regional representative of the WFH for Eastern, Southern, central Africa that speak English and Portuguese. He came into office in January 2022 hence there was a need for him to visit all the countries that he is responsible for to familiarize himself with their various works. Ghana is one of the countries that he is responsible for thus he scheduled to visit the Ghana hemophilia Society during the last week of June.

Prior to his arrival, the Society had written letters to the ministry of health, Ghana Health service, Korle Bu teaching hospital, Komfo Anokye Teaching hospital, Greater Accra Regional hospital, director for non-communicable diseases, etc. to inform them about his visit and also requesting for their audience and support.

At 2:30pm, The driver went and brought Mr. Gowa to the Ghana hemophilia Society office. Two of the board members (Mr. Misbar Samir and Mr. Francis Debrah) had already arrived to join the meeting. The meeting began at 3:00pm with introduction of members.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Martin Boakye (President)

Mr. Francis Debrah (Board member)

Mr. Misbar Samir (Board member)

Mr. Thomas Gowa (WFH representative)

Miss Christiana Angmor (Project Officer)

Miss Rahamatu Adams (Project officer)

Miss Christiana Angmor gave a presentation about the society for 25 minutes followed by a brief discussion between the members' present. Another Presentation about the Twinning program between Germany and Ghana followed. This was done by miss Rahamatu Adams. The president gave a further explanation regarding the Twinning program to the members. Mr. Gowa expressed his thought about the twinning by suggesting that for African countries to really benefit from each other, the Twinning activities should be organized by pairing two African countries at a time instead of combining an African country with an European country. This was because he thought those Europeans were much developed than the African hence there was a huge gap between them. The meeting came to an end at 4:30pm and the driver went and dropped Mr. Gowa at his hotel.





The next day being the 28th June, 2022 started with a meeting at the Greater Accra Regional hospital.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. Martin Boakye

Mr. Francis Debrah

Mr. Thomas Gowa

Miss Christiana Angmor

Miss Rahamatu Adams

Dr. Nihad Salifu

Dr. Charlyne Kilba

Mrs. Rosemary Elorm Quansah

Mr. Franklin Nyanzu

Mr. William Wireko Ansah

Mrs. Evelyn Deku

Mr. Bright Kafui Agordzo

The meeting began with members introducing themselves. Dr. Kilba welcomed everyone to the meeting after which Mr. Boakye introduced the WFH representative and stated our mission for visiting the Ridge hospital. Mr. Gowa also gave a brief statement about his visit to Ghana. Dr. Kilba stated that the hospital is excited to start running a hemophilia clinic and they will wait for training opportunities from the WFH through the Ghana hemophilia society and also support from the hospital's management in terms of logistics. Dr. Salifu stressed on the need to train doctors, nurses, physiotherapists and biomedical scientists as this was the basis for the clinic to start.



Mr. Boakye mentioned that several trainings had been conducted in the past for the laboratory scientists hence he was of the view that they are ready and would not need additional training. Mr. Wireko who is a lab. scientist and had taken part in previous trainings stated that diagnosis for hemophilia was a special test and since they did not practice it often, there was therefore the need for a refresher training. He added that there should be the availability of reagents at all times as this would sustain the hemophilia clinic. Dr. Salifu stressed that there should be regular communication between clinicians and laboratory personnel to ease work in the hospital. She suggested that a WhatsApp group could be created to aid in communication. The following are some of the concerns that were raised at the meeting

- a. A reference Laboratory where every test about hemophilia will be conducted due to the shelf life and cost of reagents
- b. Training for doctors, Nurses, Physiotherapists, laboratory scientists

Mr. Gowa expressed his appreciation to the laboratory personnel for attending the meeting and stated that he will forward their concerns to WFH in order to factor them in future trainings. Dr. Kilba said she looked forward to when the trainings will commence and that the society should communicate the timeline to the hospital in order for them to prepare. The medical director had been invited to join the meeting but he could not make it due some activities in the hospital that same morning. The meeting ended around 10.00am and the group moved to the medical director's office to brief him about the discussion.





We had to rush back to the office since there was another meeting with Novo Nordisk Hemophilia foundation. Mr. Boakye took Mr. Gowa to his hotel to rest.

The Youth members of the society had been invited to the office to meet the regional representative at 3:30pm. After the meeting with NNHF ended at 3:00pm, the driver went and brought Mr. Gowa to the office. Eight members from the youth group made it to the meeting. Those who could not make it to the office said they had exams, presentations, etc.

Mr. Boakye introduced the WFH representative to the Youth and they also introduced themselves individually. Desmond Ayerterey asked Mr. Gowa to urge the WFH to give the youth scholarship opportunities as most of them needed to continue their studies to achieve their dreams.

Mr. Gowa expressed his excitement for meeting the youth. He was surprised to know that all the eight boys had hemophilia. he commended the society for keeping the youth together and encouraged the youth to stay safe. He also told them to be reading more about the disease to equip themselves well.

The meeting came to an end at 4:30pm.





On the 29th June, 2022, the day started with another meeting at Korle Bu teaching hospital. The meeting was supposed to begin at 9:00am. We waited for the CEO for almost an hour but there was no sign of him so we proceeded to Dr. Awuku's office. She is the Hematologist in charge of the hemophiliac adult patients. the WFH representative was introduced to her. After a brief discussion, Dr. Awuku raised the following issues

1. Patients could not afford the cost of diagnosis.
2. Some patients could not afford coming to hospital frequently due to cost of transportation.

On the issue of diagnosis, she pleaded with the WFH representative to look into it and aid such patients financially. She then led the team into their treatment room where she introduced a few nurses to us. We learnt that the main nurse in charge of hemophilia cases was on leave but there were other nurses to care for the patients in her absence. Just when we exited the hematology unit, we met the nurse in charge, Mrs. Aimee Degbotse who happened to also come around for something and so she was introduced to Mr. Gowa.

We proceeded to the child-health department to meet nurse Diana, a hematology nurse who happens to be in charge of the hemophiliac children. She showed us the room in which she attends to the children. A call from the CEO's secretariat interrupted our discussion with nurse Diana so we had to rush to CEO's office to meet him. Once again, the secretary had us seated waiting for him and after fifteen minutes, we decided to leave without meeting the CEO because another meeting with the minister of health was due.





At the ministry of health, the letter we had sent earlier was given to the director of external health cooperation in the person of Dr. Adams so we were directed to his office where the meeting was held. He later mentioned that he is also the chairman for neglected tropical diseases in Africa.

Mr. Boakye gave a brief introduction of the society and why Mr. Gowa was in Ghana. He highlighted the level of awareness creation done by the society which has aided in the number of hemophilia patients discovered. He stated that there was a need to get the government involved since the number keeps increasing and the drugs donated by the WHF would stop at a point.

Mr. Gowa acknowledged the support that we already gained from government in clearing donated factors for the patients and administration done by clinicians. He advised that the government should include hemophilia treatment in the NCDs policy.

Dr. Adams said that the initiative by the Ghana Hemophilia Society and the World federation of Hemophilia was a good one and there is a need to push further. He added that hemophilia was qualified to be included on the NHIS. He assured that he will help the society in getting various stakeholders' attention on the disease. He commended the society for drawing the attention of policy makers and saving lives in Ghana.

Dr. Adams believes that it is time government takes ownership of hemophilia treatment especially when the government is advocating for 'HEALTH FOR ALL'. He mentioned that he will help us with the following

- a. Build on our proposal
- b. Give the society a slot to present the issue to other directors to increase awareness.



c. Include the issue in his agenda when he meets with foreign agencies.

A brief discussion followed after which we thanked Dr. Adams and left for another meeting with the director general of Ghana health service.



The director general of the Ghana health service in the person of Dr. Aboagye welcomed the team and Mr. Gowa was introduced. Mr. Gowa mentioned the reason for his visit to Ghana. Mr. Boakye acknowledged the help and support that the society has always enjoyed from the Ghana health service.

Dr. Aboagye talked about how the primary health services are not able to care for hemophiliacs due to lack of logistics and how hemophilia cases are always referred to tertiary hospitals. Mr. Boakye then pleaded with the Dr. Aboagye to help the society champion the case of hemophilia to the Ghana government.

Dr. Aboagye suggested that a reference center be created where every case of hemophilia will be conducted. The meeting ended at 3:30pm and we went for lunch.



On Thursday 28th June, 2022, the team travelled to Komfo Anokye teaching hospital in Kumasi. The head of the hematology unit, Dr. Sackey picked us from the airport straight to the hospital. Limmy Sarpong, a hemophilia nurse joined us at Dr. sackey's office and we then moved to the medical director's office. We learnt that the medical director was on leave so the deputy director of the research unit (Dr. Kwadwo Saabin) was the acting medical director.

He welcomed us to the hospital and Mr. Boakye introduced the team. Dr. Painstil also introduced the Kumasi team in charge of hemophilia care. Mr. Boakye explained how the Kumasi team have been very committed. He pointed that the WFH and NNHF have been the support base for the society. Mr. Gowa expressed his excitement for finally meeting the Kumasi team as he had heard that they were committed to hemophilia work. He also stated his role as the regional representative and the reason for his visit.

Dr. Painstil expressed her gratitude to the WFH for always donating drugs to Ghana. The Board chairman (Dr. Opare Sem) joined the meeting at that moment so Mr. Boakye acknowledged his presence. Dr. Sackey also expressed his gratitude to the society for collaborating with NNHF to donate a coagulation machine to the Laboratory unit. Dr. Opare Sem said that the hospital should create a unit for hemostasis and the acting medical director agreed with him. The acting medical director mentioned that a new project was ongoing hence he would draw managements' attention to the creation of a hemostasis unit in the hospital

Miss Christiana Angmor thanked the hospital for their support over the years. The team was led to the child health department library to meet a few parents and patients.



At the patients meeting, Nurse Ellen, a hemophilia nurse introduced the team to the parents and patients present. Mr. Boakye gave a short address after which Mr. Gowa also spoke for a while. He then asked some parents to give a testimony about Hemlibra. four parents spoke positively about how the drug has really helped them and their children. Both Mr. Boakye and the WFH representative advised the parent to continue taking their children to hospital regularly and encourage the children to be serious with their studies to become better citizens. The parents expressed their gratitude to the president and the WFH for their support.

There was refreshment for the parents and patients whilst Limmy and Ellen led Mr. Boakye and the WFH representative to the clinical area.



After the meetings at the hospital, we went for lunch and took a stroll inside the cultural center where Mr. Gowa got some art crafts to take to Kenya. We also had the opportunity to learn some Ashanti History at the Prempeh II jubilee Museum. We left the cultural center at 4:00pm to catch our flight back to Accra.

On Friday 1st July, 2022, the driver went to pick Mr. Gowa from his hotel at 9:45am to the airport because he had to return to Kenya. The team was not able to see him off due to the fact that we got to Accra late the previous night thus everyone was tired.

In conclusion, the visit of the WFH representative was fruitful as all the appointments to meet with policy makers was fulfilled. Mr. Gowa had the opportunity to understand how things work in our side of the world and we believe he will communicate our concerns to the World Federation of hemophilia. We also hope that the WFH will consider all the concerns raised and give the society the necessary support.

