ACC CARDIOLOGISTS TRAVEL TO TANZANIA FOR CONFERENCE ON ACQUIRED HEART DISEASE IN AFRICA

By Thomas Nygaard MD, FACC, and Daniel Carey, MD, FACC

n 2007, Dilantha Ellegala, MD, had just finished his neurosurgery fellowship in Boston. Before taking his first faculty position in Oregon he decided to spend time with international medicine and soon found himself at Haydom Norwegian Lutheran Hospital in Haydom, Tanzania. He quickly realized the practice of having foreign physicians come to Tanzania and East Africa, provide their services and then leave, did not provide lasting benefit to patients. Having teaching providers in Tanzania (often nurses) perform basic neurosurgical procedures was key to improving health care in the region. He also wanted to expand to areas outside of neurosurgery.

Soon after returning from Africa, Ellegala started the non-profit organization Madaktari Africa (Madaktari is the Swahili name for doctor) to teach physicians and providers in Africa how to better care for their own population. As Madaktari Africa has grown and expanded, cardiovascular disease has become a part of its program.

Most recently, Madaktari Africa and the Tanzania Department of Health initiated an International Cardiovascular

Diseases Course in Dar es Salaam

the conference and provided continuing medical education certificates for all of the conference attendees.

More than 100 cardiologists from East Africa attended the course, in addition to nearly a dozen ACC members from the US. Participants heard from representatives from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi on the status of cardiovascular diseases in their country and had opportunities to review and discuss the resources available to treat cardiovascular disease patients in the region. They also heard from US representatives on all aspects of acquired heart disease.

After the didactic portion of the conference, US representatives toured the new 100-bed Cardiac Hospital donated by the People's Republic of China. This new hospital is the first catheterization lab in the country and the first dedicated heart hospital in East Africa. In addition, US representatives had a chance to meet with **Mohamed Janabi**, **MD**, **FACC**, the Tanzanian president's personal physician and the country's top health care advisor, where they reviewed the system of care delivery at Muhimbili and in Tanzania. They also met with the president of Tanzania to give their impressions of cardiovascular care in the country as well as suggestions for implementing the catheterization program and expanding the noninvasive program. As many patients must now travel outside of Tanzania, typically to India, for cardiovascular disease treatments, the goal is to help Tanzanian physicians

open the catheterization lab and expand their ability to treat cardiovascular disease patients.

> A second Cardiovascular Diseases Conference has been planned for August 2013 in Arusha, Tanzania.

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