



THE SQUARE
advanced dental care



PATIENT NEWSLETTER

April 2020

One of our many lovely patients, Hannah Jefferson who is a nurse at the MRI and is doing amazing things to help keep us all safe.

This is her story about her selfless work in Ghana. She truly deserves our prayers and praise.



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My name is Hannah Jefferson and I'm a recent nursing graduate from The University of Manchester, My first job was not in an NHS hospital, but as a volunteer at a hospital in Ghana, West Africa. After spending seven weeks in 2017 though the university's elective placement, I was inspired to return as a qualified nurse, on a solo humanitarian mission.

My experience from 2017 was something that had stayed with me, and I felt compelled to return and help as much as possible.

My personal mission was to provide the emergency department with a defibrillator (there wasn't one in the entire hospital) and as many medical resources as I could.

I achieved this as a result of a gofundme.com page and the generous donations from friends, family, colleagues and strangers. I chose to go to Ghana to challenge myself, gain experience working in an alternative culture, climate and environment, and learn about the epidemiological differences. I spent the majority of my time working in the emergency department of a city hospital.

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The Emergency Department

The lack of resources and equipment is shocking and takes some getting used to. The Emergency Department is one room, with five beds and three chairs. There was a broken defibrillator, no ventilators, and an ECG machine with no electrodes. The only diagnostic equipment available was one thermometer, one pulse oximeter, one tattered blood pressure cuff and a malaria test (which only tests for one of the four malaria types). Having no defibrillator or a working ECG machine means that patients cannot be saved if they suffer cardiac arrest.

In 2017, there were no emergency ambulances, and on my visit this time, there was just one ambulance that had been commissioned for the whole city, except it did not get called out because no one was aware of its existence. On top of the lack of resources, there is no running water, and the temperature is around > 30 degrees centigrade. Patients have to wait sometimes days to be seen, even in cases of trauma. A lot of the time patients cannot afford treatment, and can die because of this. Being in such a poorly equipped hospital really brings to light what a privilege it is to have our NHS in place.

I also spent a few days working in the dental clinic, My own amazing dentist, Riaz at the Square, had donated some resources himself, which the Ghanaian staff were excited to receive.

The setup was similar to the UK, they had a small lab for dentures and two chairs (one was broken). The equipment was modest, they had no X-ray facility so patients had to be sent away for this in another city, if they could afford it.

All patients that attended that day were attending for acute pain. Due to costs of treatment, tooth saving was not an option for any patients that day. Additionally, patients had waited until the pain became unbearable before visiting the dentist, so extraction was the only option. I saw eight extractions. Patients were generally very calm and brave. Each patient received education on returning every 6 months. Due to all the extractions, the denture laboratory was very busy.

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“ Highlights

On both occasions I absolutely loved working in Ghana, even though the challenges were the most extreme and most difficult experiences I've ever had to deal with – both in my career and in my life. I learnt how to treat injuries that I would never likely come across in the UK – machete injuries, explosion burns, snake/spider bites and scorpion stings to name a few! I also treated a number of tropical infectious diseases; as Ghana is in a sub-Saharan tropical climate, mosquitos are abundant and this makes Malaria one of the biggest killers in the region. Other prevalent diseases in Ghana are typhoid, yellow fever, TB, hepatitis, HIV and cholera.

The whole experience was a mutual transfer of knowledge between myself and my Ghanaian co-workers. Whilst I learnt how to treat diseases and injuries that I wouldn't normally have to contend with in the UK, I was able to teach the most up-to-date method of Basic Life Support to the nurses there.

My biggest moment was probably resuscitating a new-born – having had quite a traumatic experience the previous year dealing with new-borns who had passed away (a devastatingly common occurrence in Ghana), I was determined to get back in and do everything I could to keep this baby alive. After forty minutes of resuscitation, he took his first breath I was overwhelmed with joy and relief, it was amazing to see the family's response – as it's common to lose new-borns in Ghana, they had quietly resigned themselves to their grief.

Another highlight was appearing on local radio in support of Breast Cancer Awareness and donating boxes of condoms to the HIV clinic, kindly donated from the University of Manchester's Occupational Health service.

What's next for me?

I'm currently working as an A&E nurse at a busy hospital in Manchester. I plan to work towards a humanitarian career, and am hoping to return to Ghana next year to provide further support and resources.

I have written a blog documenting my humanitarian nursing work here:
<https://nursinginghana2017.wordpress.com>

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Oral health is linked to your overall health and wellbeing - take it from the World Health Organisation

We hope you are continuing to look after your teeth in the Square Dental way – diligent tooth-brushing (preferably with an electric toothbrush) and cleaning in-between your teeth with floss, 'floss picks' or interdental brushes twice daily.

Now is a more important time than ever to keep up with your good oral health habits. The World Health Organisation themselves have stressed that with healthy mouths come healthy bodies and a better quality of life. Keeping your mouth healthy now will prevent dental problems and treatment needed in the future.

Here are our top tips for keeping your mouth sparkling clean and healthy during lockdown:

Brush and floss at least twice daily.

If you use an electric toothbrush, hold at a 45 degree angle toward the gum line and move in a circular movement over the front, top and back of teeth.

Don't scrub too hard on your gums as you may do them more harm than good!

If you find string floss difficult or painful to use, try Curaprox interdental brushes for cleaning between the teeth.

If your gums bleed when brushing or flossing, you may not be cleaning your teeth as often or as effectively as needed — keep up twice daily cleaning (including between your teeth) and bleeding should subside within a week.

Rinse your mouth with/sip water after eating to prevent plaque build up.

Rinse with a fluoride mouthwash after brushing for an extra fluoride boost.

Remember also to try and move your body daily (see below!), eat sensibly and keep your diet low in sugary and acidic food and drinks. If you wear braces or have implants or crowns, try to avoid hard or sticky foods that could pose a risk of fracture or breakage such as nuts, popcorn, and toffee. If you smoke, this is a perfect time to set yourself the challenge to stop.



Move your body!

Now is a great time to put those new year's resolutions into action! We're sure most of you that wrote down some resolutions just a few months ago will have added included something exercise related. They say it takes 30 days to form a habit, so why not use the next few weeks to get into a home exercise routine that suits you, especially since there are so many free resources available. Healthy body, healthy mind!

If you need some extra encouragement, here are our top exercise finds for keeping fit during the lockdown:

Try Joe Wicks' free, daily YouTube workouts to improve your overall fitness levels — on your own or with the kids — youtube.com/thebodycoach1

To increase flexibility and get some headspace, try a relaxing yoga flow with Adriene - youtube.com/yogawithadriene

Take part in the 'Run for Heroes' initiative to raise money for the NHS - run 5K, donate £5 and nominate 5 more friends when you finish - uk.virginmoneygiving.com/RunForHeroes

If you're missing your gym classes, try the Peloton app for at-home gym classes with a virtual group - free for 90 days if you sign up before 30 April - onepeloton.co.uk/



From Easter Eggs to Fresh Fruit And Veg.

We'll let you off for a little indulgence in chocolate bars and Easter eggs over the long weekend, but now it's time to move on to healthier snacks which are easier on your smile. Try to swap out snacking on sweets and chocolate for fresh fruit and veg.

There are lots of local fresh produce suppliers offering home delivery of fruit and veg boxes straight to your doorstep. It's a great way to try new recipes and improve your health.

Dental tip: don't forget that fruit is high in sugar. Even though it's naturally occurring, too much can be harmful to your teeth. Try eating more berries (they're in season!) which are lower in sugar than other fruits such as apples or mango.

For a healthy snack for the kids, try a blueberry and oat smoothie for breakfast instead of cereal, or homemade fruit yoghurt ice lollies as an afternoon snack or dessert.

We as a team have been keeping ourselves busy

Selma our Specialist Nurse has been working at the recent urgent dental care centre's set up to help take the burden off the NHS. I wonder how we can help people get over their dental anxiety when we are dressed like this. The key objective will be safe dentistry for all.



Jeannette – Senior Dental Nurse has been busy building and creating a beautiful garden to harvest natural organic fruits, herbs and vegetables.



Thank You, Key Workers

Finally, we know that many of our patients are either NHS or key workers themselves or have close family and friends who are. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for all you are doing. We will be clapping for you this Thursday.

We look forward to welcoming you back very soon, and remember if we can help in any way, please contact us.

