

2011 Summary of the Ladakh Disability & Rehabilitation Training (LDRT) Program

From 2007- 2009, the LDRT program had a Community-based Rehabilitation focus with direct work with local NGO HEALTH Inc in the remote villages of Ladakh. Interest from the doctors at the government hospital began in 2009 with the joint development of Ladakh's first mental health primer by local doctors, HEALTH Inc and the Canadian Team. In 2010, the Pediatric Unit for Special Children was established and inaugurated with joint efforts by the hospital staff and the Canadian team. This is a report of the 1-year follow-up.



On 2 July 2011 the staff of the Pediatric Unit for Special Children and the Canadian team presented the following documents to:

- Dr. Dolma, Chief Medical Officer
- Dr. P. Tsering, Medical Superintendent of Sonam Norboo Memorial Hospital
- Dr. Namgyal, ENT
- Dr. Spalchen, Pediatrician
- Dr. Rinchen Angmo, Pediatrician

The areas of discussion in this meeting included:

- Review of documents
- Plans for 2012 Canadian training team
- Lack of communication within hospital about patients
- Lack of funding for materials and resources
- The development and training approach of the unit
- Recruitment and retention of unit professional staff

Overall, there was a strong commitment from everyone to ensure the continued success and growth of the Pediatric Unit.

Canadian Team Recommendations for the Pediatric Unit for Special Children
July 2011 (1 year post-inauguration)

The following recommendations are required in order for the Canadian team to continue funding medical trainers to travel to Ladakh in future years.

1. The physiotherapist post, currently filled by Dolma Lhamo, must be made permanent in order for continued success of the pediatric unit.
2. A nurse clinician must be posted permanently to the unit for use in therapy and parent education sessions. The volunteer, Konchok Yangdol, is the best candidate for this position as she is already familiar with therapy treatment ideas and the team.
3. The physiotherapist and the unit manager cannot be transferred out of the unit after 2 years due to the specialized knowledge they have gained in working with children and families. The Canadian team will continue to build their skills in future visits.
4. The unit requires a monthly budget (petty cash) for ongoing supplies and materials. Sonam Norboo, the unit manager, can manage this fund.
5. A Canadian psychologist is set to visit Ladakh in 2012 for training. In order for this to happen, an interested professional must fill a post at the unit.

Summary of 2011 Canadian Visit

- Alexis Davis, Occupational Therapist & Project Coordinator & Kate Wishart, Speech-Language Pathologist worked with the Pediatric Unit staff from 20 June until 2 July 2011. This year's visit was self-funded by the LDRT Canadian team.
- Progress of the unit was reviewed and a 1-year report was written to summarize all services provided. As requested, this has been emailed to the Health Ministers from Delhi who visited the unit on 22 June 2011.
- A resource library was started with the generous donation of Tamara Blesh, the *Traveling Librarian*.
- Resource materials were uploaded onto the Pediatric Unit & ENT computers. Additional play therapy resources donated for use in therapy with young children.
- Kate Wishart worked with Dr. Namgyal and his speech therapists to train them in how to assess and treat speech and language skills in hearing-impaired children more effectively.
- Four planning sessions were completed with the unit staff to review the overall operation of the unit and to organize goals for future success.



Pediatric Unit for Special Children: SNM Hospital Leh- Ladakh **Annual Report – Year 1 – July 2010 – June 2011**

Mission Statement:

The SNM Pediatric Unit for Special Children will improve the quality of life for people with disabilities and their families by providing assessment and treatment services for children from birth to 18 years coming from all areas of Ladakh, who have a variety of disabilities. The unit will provide comprehensive, holistic care promoting respect and dignity for people with disabilities and will support them to lead meaningful, productive lives.

Background:

The need for a Pediatric Unit for Special Children was identified by a **Central Level Hon'ble Minister (Govt. of India) Sh. Jai Ramesh**. On 26th July 2010, after much planning and organization, the unit was inaugurated by Sh. Sham Lal Sharma Hon'ble Minister for Health, Horticulture & Floriculture J & K State, Sh. N. Rigzin Jora Hon'ble Minister for Tourism and Culture, J&K, and other dignitaries, State and District officers with funds from a one-time grant through **the National Rural Health Mission**.

Summary of Outcomes:

The Ladakhi medical team (including doctor, unit manager, physiotherapist and FMPHW) in partnership with the Canadian Therapy team prepared and decorated the unit for the recruitment of new patients. Through radio announcements, 19 patients were seen during joint sessions with the Canadian therapy training team. During the remainder of the 1st year, 25 additional patients were assessed and treated by the Ladakhi team. In total, 221 rehabilitation appointments were carried out in the unit in the first year of operation.

Services provided to families by the unit's professional staff included:

- Education to families and children about disability issues
- Counseling provided to parents about their children's conditions
- Rehabilitation therapy for gross motor, fine motor, learning, daily life and communication skills and mental health issues
- Promotion of socialization and self-confidence of the children
- Creation of a friendly, safe and welcoming environment where families can connect with each other and network
- Collaboration and referrals to other hospital departments
- Provision of equipment loans (walking aids) to patients
- Mental health trauma counseling to 9 villages after cloud burst
- Resource library for children, parents and professionals started with the assistance of Tamara Blesh, the *Traveling Librarian*

Demographics

Patient Groups	Age	No. of Patients
<1 y		3
1-3		12
4-6		11
7-12		9
13-19		6
20+		3



Referral Source of total patients		
Doctors from hospital	Radio adverts	Word-of-mouth
23	11	10



Residence					
Leh-Kharu	Khalts e	Nubra	Nyoma	Tangste	Kargil
19*	5	3	3	2	12

*4 of the 19 patients were temporary residents of Leh



Future Recommendations:

1. Sustainable funding is necessary for retention and recruitment of permanent professional staff.
2. Ongoing awareness of disability issues and rehabilitation to the public for continued referrals to the Pediatric Unit for Special Children.
3. Community outreach and parent education must continue through Block-level medical camps.
4. Transportation and hostel accommodation for families is required for non-Leh residents to attend the unit for medical and rehabilitation services.
5. Sustainable funding is required for equipment resources and professional development.