



A project of Kind Cuts for Kids,

supported by

University Clinical Center of Kosovo

And

Oceania University of Medicine

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Introduction

Since 2011, Kind Cuts for kids has undertaken 27 country visits to the Balkans, of which 12 have now been to Kosovo. The involvement in the region was stimulated by a recognition that patients being transferred to Australia could be cared for in the Balkans, and that surgery in the country of origin will help empower Balkan Paediatric Surgeons, while giving world's best practice care for the children. Why so many years? Unfortunately, the challenges are great, the duration of the visits brief, and the much-needed resource and system changes have not occurred. A particular feature of this visit was the need to remediate poor outcomes that have arisen from patients having substandard care after seeking treatment outside Kosovo.

Clinical care

During the two week visit, which included a student from the Oceania University of Medicine as part of the Kind Cuts for Kids team, a further 36 patients were added to the individual cases seen in Kosovo, taking the total to 300 for the 12 years.

In 2022, 67 patients have been reviewed, 31 of whom have had an operation, during a total of 35 anaesthetics. The recorded contact episodes were 167, although not all ward encounters were noted. Never-the-less, the outpatient and ward encounters totaled 96. In addition, the number of operative procedures was 71, as detailed in the table, noting that the majority of operations related to anorectal and genital anomalies.

Cystoscopy	– 7
Examination under anaesthetic	– 7
Laparotomy	– 2
Pena related	– 12
Hypospadias related	– 18
Ureteric reimplant	– 4
Removal Malone Monte Stoma	– 2
Mitrofanoff stoma	– 1
Ureterocele incision	– 1
Pyeloureterostomy	– 1
Inguinal herniotomy	– 2
Gonadal Biopsy	– 2
Laparoscopy	– 1
Repair of vesicovaginal fistula	– 1
Other	– 5



These three boys had surgery after adverse events from previous anorectal operations. All with good results on this occasion.

Clinical care ... Patient Diagnoses

Anorectal anomalies	– 13
Hirschsprung	– 5
Megarectum	– 4
Hypospadias	– 21
Disorder of sexual differentiation	– 4
Aphallia	– 1
Renal	– 13
Spina Bifida	– 3
Other	– 3

Two cases that particularly highlight an improved variation in practice were the two girls with vesicoureteric reflux, both of whom were managed without the insertion of a urinary catheter, enabling the first to go home on the day of surgery, and the other to return home within 24 hours of her operation. Recent research from the Oceania University of Medicine indicates that 58% of surgeons leave a catheter in for more than 48 hours, which is unnecessary.

Case Study 1

A 16 year young lady with **Spina bifida**, who is confined to a wheelchair and has to catheterize her bladder to empty her urine, but leaks as well. She therefore needed to have her bladder enlarged and an abdominal stoma put in place to enable her to self-manage. Her associated Hydrocephalus is managed with a ventriculoperitoneal shunt.

The first consultation with Kind Cuts for Kids with Professor Dewan was in 2019 for recurrent UTIs and difficulty with clean intermittent catheterisation (CIC) for which it was planned that a catheterisable stoma be established, known as a Mitrofanoff procedure, in which the appendix is attached to the skin and the bladder to facilitate the urine being more easily drained with the intermittent catheters. The bladder was also enlarged to improve continence, with the segment of bowel attached to the appendix - an ileocaecalcystoplasty – she will now be continent and be able to empty her bladder more easily via the stoma that exits at her umbilicus – as seen in the photo – the upper of the two blue catheters.



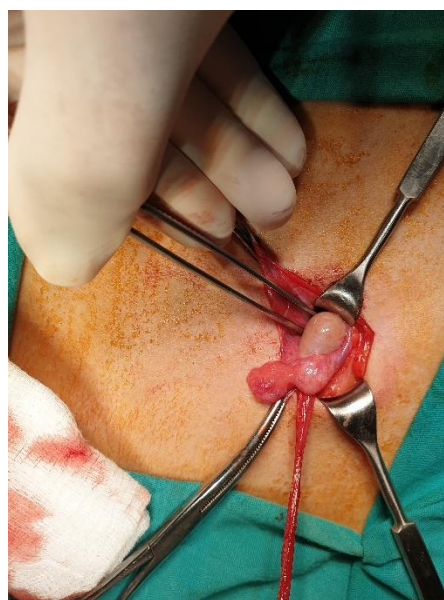
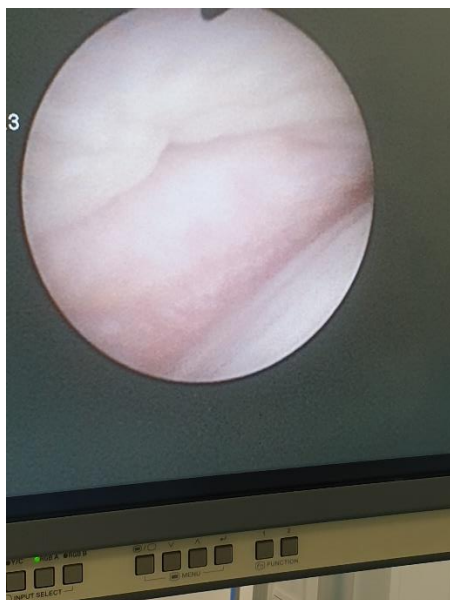
Case Study 2

The Kosovo team presented an 11-year-old child with a previous diagnosis of Turner's syndrome, and a very enlarged clitoris. Turner's syndrome is usually caused by loss of all or part of one X chromosome, but there can be a number of chromosomal anomaly variations, including incorporation of Y chromosome material.

The patient had been raised a girl and wished to have her penis-like phallus changed to a clitoris. So, for further evaluation had an intra-abdominal inspection with a laparoscope that showed an abnormal "streak" gonad on the right, a right uterine horn and what seemed to be an ovotestis, with no left uterine horn, exploration of the left groin repaired a hernia and enabled tissue to be retrieved for pathology; to be evaluated in collaboration with the endocrinology team.

It is anticipated that the left gonad will be removed at the time of the genital reconstruction later this year, with the thought that the testosterone producing tissue will interfere with the success of the desired gender assignment, noting that internal inspection of her perineum indicated a normal vagina and cervix.

The images show (left) the normal cervix on the study performed to investigate the internal anatomy, the image on the right shows the probable ovotestis at exploration, which also involved the repair of an inguinal hernia.



Equipment Issues

A great leap forward for the care of children with surgical disease has been made with the opening of the New Building (images below), with the notable feature of the excellent infrastructure in the wards and theatre. However, there continues to be a number of system issues and problems of the supply of disposable medical equipment.



Two particularly positive features of the new hospital are the lights in theatre and the ultrasound machine in the ward clinic; as well, there has been an improvement in the endoscopic equipment available. However, there are some ongoing concerns about the provision of disposable items which were, at least in the short-term, ameliorated by the supplies provided by the Kind cuts for Kids team.

Donations of Equipment



As usual, a range of equipment was provided, including sutures (supplied by BBraun), urethral catheters, feeding tubes and diathermy tips, to name just some of the almost \$15,000 of donated equipment, as see in the case (left).

Media Coverage

Once again the media were very supportive of the project, as was the hospital media department. The cooperation will help promote improved care for children.



The Pictures Tell the Story – The Work



The Pictures Tell the Story – The Patients

