

Press Release

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RUH expertise shared with overseas colleagues

On 1 of February, a team from the RUH Intensive Care Unit will be setting off again to lecture in South East Asia. In 2005 and 2006 Consultant Nurse Julian Hunt, and doctors Tim Cook and Jerry Nolan were invited to visit Viet Nam to run a course on Intensive Care at the Centre for Tropical Diseases in Ho Chi Minh City. The success of those courses has lead to an invitation to run the same course in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia.

Like Viet Nam, Indonesia is thought to be one of the areas where the risk of bird flu is high. The virus causes very severe inflammation of the lungs and other organs and requires high quality intensive care treatment for patients to have any chance of survival. The team will be updating the intensive care skills of doctors and nurses in those hospitals in Jakarta designated to receive patients with bird flu.

Doctor Nolan says the learning involved is a 2 way process: "We find it highly rewarding to take the knowledge and skills that we have acquired at the Royal United Hospital and pass this on to healthcare workers in Asia, who don't have the benefit of our NHS resources. This is never a one-way flow of knowledge. In reality we return with as many new clinical insights and ideas as we have imparted. We learn a great deal about the recognition and treatment of various tropical diseases. Although uncommon in the UK, we do occasionally see patients with diseases such as tetanus and malaria; the knowledge and professional contacts established during our visits to Asia then become invaluable."

The course is being funded by the American body the National Institute for Health, and the team are all taking annual leave from their jobs at the RUH to make the trip. Jerry Nolan and Tim Cook are consultants in Intensive Care and Anaesthesia. Julian Hunt leads the Intensive Care Outreach team, responsible for supporting ward staff in their care of acutely sick patients. Teaching with them in Jakarta is Parisian Professor Jean-Daniel Chiche, from the Réanimation Médicale & Dept de Biologie Cellulaire Hopital COCHIN & Institut Cochin.

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