

Soft Power Health

1st Quarter Update
2020

What's New:

The first quarter of 2020 presented all kinds of firsts for Soft Power Health. Like many other organizations, we were carried through a range of experiences (all good!) and unexpected opportunities to learn and grow in many ways! To begin with, Soft Power Health is happy to report that we have remained open during the lockdown in Uganda, which began toward the end of March and is ongoing. The lockdown has limited all movement, including vehicular movement, but Soft Power Health has continued serving patients 6 days a week and providing much-needed and sought-after community based family planning outreaches. Most patients must arrive on foot, as public transportation is not allowed; however, the Soft Power Health vehicle has gotten permission to drive, and is very busy picking up staff, delivering patients, and collecting medication and lab supplies on a daily



Triage Team Member Loy consults with a patient on how to wear her mask.

basis. Although Clinic numbers are down from over 100 patients per day, we are still serving a very good number of patients daily. Aside from the pandemic, our patients still need treatment for common health problems that are life threatening, such as malaria, bacterial infections, and malignant hypertension, to name a few. We also continue to reach some of our most in-need homebound patients with food and medical supplies. Many of these patients would otherwise die without care and at-home visits. This is only possible thanks to your generous donations.

Thank you very much for your ongoing support!



Cook Irene showing off the new fuel-efficient stove in the Clinic kitchen.

and specific for coronavirus is not available in Uganda, although we hope it will be one day soon.

While COVID-19 has changed the landscape of how we operate, it has not changed what we do, other than limiting some of our outreach work. One amazing thing about Uganda is that people always figure out how to adapt and get things done, especially when there is not a clear path ahead. This is the norm. The entire Soft Power Health staff has been properly trained and equipped to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, and we share this knowledge with all patients who come to the Clinic or visit us in family planning outreach. Uganda's numbers of coronavirus are very low, and this is for a variety of reasons: one, because testing is very limited and expensive, affordable by only a small segment of the population, and two, because PCR testing is not very accurate, detecting only 70% of active infections. Also, antibody testing that is sensitive

In the meantime, the fear of coronavirus is causing other unintended consequences, such as widespread hunger. This is the biggest challenge for Ugandans, apart from the fear of getting the virus. I remain optimistic that coronavirus itself will not pose an enormous health threat in Uganda; however, I worry that it will be the unintended consequences of how the disease is being handled that will really impact most Ugandans. To that end, I am very thankful that we can keep most of Soft Power Health's work going and keep our staff employed, so that they in turn can take care of their families during this time. Nicholas Kristoff has written a terrific article about this subject. Here is the link: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/22/opinion/coronavirus-pandemics.html>



Dr. Laura at a family planning outreach with nurses Jane and Esther Jane.

In the world before coronavirus, during the first quarter of 2020, we were lucky enough to have some wonderful other firsts: Emily Jackson, World Champion Freestyle Kayaker, came to visit and volunteer with Soft Power Health. Thanks to Emily's efforts, we found a fuel-efficient stove for the Soft Power Health kitchen, and through her Facebook campaign, the money was raised to purchase the stove and have it installed. Our cooks, Esther and Irene, have been thrilled with the new stove so far and it has already significantly reduced our need for charcoal. The stove is Ugandan-made and designed and uses solar power and Ugandan volcanic rocks to cook the food. It is much more sustainable long-term, and reduces the smoke problems associated with charcoal cooking as well. Thank you Emily! The new stove is a fantastic, much-needed addition!

We also had a visit from Dr. Laura MacIsaac (her second), and Price Lowenstein (his first), both longtime supporters of Soft Power Health's work. Dr. Laura is a family planning expert who has spent her career providing family planning and Ob/Gyn services for underserved communities in New York City. As a resident doctor, she worked in Ethiopia at the fistula hospital started by Dr. Catherine Hamlin. Dr. Laura and Price visited the Clinic and family planning outreach, providing important consultation services, and Dr. Laura did an extremely valuable continuing medical education lecture for all staff. By the number of questions asked during and after the lecture, it was clear that everyone was soaking up this new information like sponges. The entire Soft Power Health team can't wait for Dr. Laura and Price to come back and visit again. As family planning is one of our largest and longest-running outreaches, we strive to make it as up-to-date and high quality as possible. To that end, Dr. Laura's input is vital.



Taking extra precautions at the lab.

Finally, the Kyabirwa Surgical Center ran an endoscopy training and diagnostic program in the middle of February. Dr. Jerry Wey, world renowned gastroenterologist from the U.S. came for a week of training to teach Ugandan doctors how to do endoscopy at the new surgical center next door to Soft Power Health. Endoscopy is virtually unknown in Uganda, and its availability is a huge boon to the Clinic and our patients. Several patients and some of the staff directly benefitted from these trainings. We hope Dr. Jerry will be back to do more trainings in the future. Since its opening in October, the Kyabirwa Surgical Center has benefitted a number of our patients and continues to do so. This is wonderful news for the communities we serve.

The Allan Stone Community Health Clinic:

From January through March, the Clinic saw 8,030 patients. 45% of the patients were new attendees and 55% were returning. During this quarter, Soft Power Health referred 327 patients for surgeries, advanced testing, or cancer treatment in the Kampala-Entebbe area. 1,733 of the patients triaged at the Clinic were children. This accounts for 22% of our patients this quarter. 49% of these children are new patients, 51% are returning patients. And of the children triaged, 33% are diagnosed as severely malnourished and are in need of high energy milk. As



Nurse Aisha takes a patient's vitals.

severe malnutrition is considered life threatening, luckily, this is something we can treat at the Clinic. Overall, hypertension (i.e., high blood pressure) remained the most commonly treated disease and malaria held steady as the fourth most commonly treated disease.

Soft Power Health's dentist, Dr. Paul, saw 62 dental patients this quarter. This number is lower than usual, as there were no dental patients in March due to the corona virus lockdown. The top 6 diagnoses were periodontal disease (33), extractions (14), fillings (3), neuropathies (3), dental abscesses (3), and dry sockets (2). There were 4 referrals. Dr. Paul has been able to secure a modern dental chair and can now offer improved services to our patients. This is a great, cost effective and health promoting help to our patients. We are glad to offer access to these important health services at the Clinic, as dental

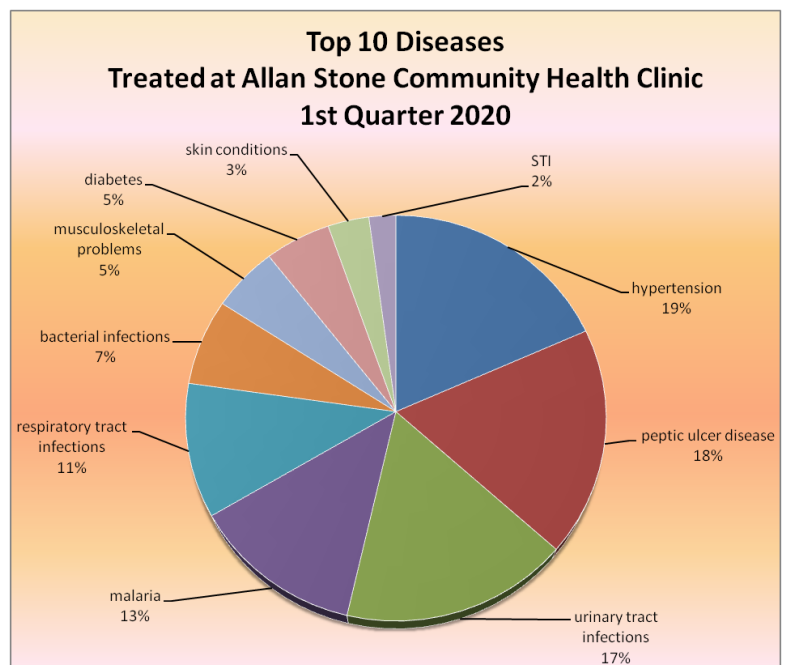
health is an important part of overall health, and is not easily accessible in Uganda.

In the 1st quarter of 2020, 662 physical therapy patients were treated by Stephen Kato, Rachel, and Flavia. The most commonly treated condition was lower back pain (208) followed by conditions related to cerebral palsy (99) and lower limb pain (91). The fourth most commonly treated condition was knee pain with 44 patients being treated and the fifth most common condition treated were post-stroke patients. 38 such patients were seen by the physical therapists. The majority of PT patients (608) were seen at the Clinic. Of those patients, 276 were new patients and 332 were returning. This quarter 54 of the total were treated via community based outreach programs in Lukolo village, with 3 patients being new and 51 being patients who get ongoing care. The outreach program remains the very best way to reach patients who are not able to travel to the Clinic. Many of these patients are bedbound or too poor to afford transport.

Our ultrasound machine continues to be a great benefit to our clinicians and patients! This quarter we provided 88 scans to 88 of our patients. 57 were women, 26 were men and 5 were children. 35 pelvic scans were performed, as were 8 obstetric scans and 12 other various scans. Of the total ultrasounds, 33 scans were normal, and 55 revealed an abnormality that required further investigation and treatment.

Top 10 Diseases Treated this quarter:

The most common diseases treated at the Clinic were, in descending order: hypertension, (1,428); peptic ulcer disease, (1,411); urinary tract infections, (1,322); malaria, including 14 cases of malaria in pregnancy (1,004); respiratory tract infections, including 37 cases of pneumonia, (829); bacterial



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infections, (534); musculoskeletal problems, (408); diabetes, (406); skin conditions (253); sexually transmitted infections not HIV, (165).

Mother and Child Wellness Center:

Between January and March, 256 courses of high energy milk were prescribed to 148 severely malnourished patients, mostly children. In some instances, the patient's malnutrition was severe enough to require several courses of HEM. A portion of the severely malnourished patients we treat have cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy



Malnutrition education session at Mama Joy, Njeru.

or another condition from which they will not recover. These preconditions automatically put them at higher risk to be malnourished, especially in the context of life in Uganda, where getting enough food and a nutritionally balanced meal can be a challenge even for healthy people. High energy milk can really help these patients improve despite their disease. This quarter, 38 of the malnourished patients treated with HEM were also cerebral palsy patients. Approximately 26% of patients receiving high energy milk have cerebral palsy. In addition, 146 rounds of vaccinations were administered this quarter.

At the Mother and Child Wellness Center, 190 women received intermediate term, and long term family planning methods: 161 three-month courses of injectable birth control were administered (that is, 129 courses of Depo-Provera and 32 courses of Sayana-press) and 6

three-month packages of birth control pills were distributed to women who chose these forms of family planning. 21 long-term implants were placed and 17 were removed. 2 IUDs were placed and none were removed. Three women received counseling about side effects of family planning, and 71 women requested and received pregnancy tests. Four of these tests were positive. 1,334 condoms were distributed this quarter. Family planning uptake continues to be very robust, and we are happy that we can help meet the needs of these women!

Nutrition/Malnutrition Outreach

This quarter, 216 families participated in malnutrition education outreaches in 8 villages in our home district of Jinja. Follow up home visits were made to 57 former participants' homes in 3 villages to assess knowledge retention and implementation at the home level. At these malnutrition education outreaches, vitamin supplementation, deworming and vaccination are offered as well. Thanks to Vitamin Angels with their ongoing donations of vitamins and deworming treatments, we were also able to deworm 712 individuals with Albendazole, the treatment of choice for hook worm, a leading cause of anemia along with malaria in Uganda. 2,121 courses of



Emily Jackson assists at a malaria education session.

Vitamin A were given to children in need, as well as 4,320 courses of prenatal vitamins to pregnant and lactating women. These community-based health education outreaches have tremendous positive impact on day to day improved health for participants. Thank you to the education team for keeping everyone so engaged and helping them learn!

Malaria Education, Prevention, and Follow- Up:

This quarter, 360 people attended our malaria education and prevention sessions that took place in 6 villages in two districts. In addition, between the Clinic and our malaria education outreaches, we sold 1,450 nets. Specifically, 735 nets were sold during educational outreach sessions while 715 nets were sold at the Clinic. The malaria outreach team made 57 follow-up visits in 6 villages to evaluate whether previously purchased nets from education sessions were being used correctly and whether people reported having less malaria. As the burden of malaria has crept up again in our area thanks to the creation of the enormous Isimba Dam reservoir, as well as an unending rainy season for much of 2019, and now into 2020, the demand for mosquito nets and education about their use has increased markedly. To that end, we sold our last mosquito nets in March and have ordered a new container. We expect to be well covered with nets for the next 5 years once this container of 14,000 Duranet mosquito nets reaches us!



Dr. Geromo consults with mother and child patients at the Clinic.

DIG Garden

The Clinic's demonstration garden did well this quarter, producing eggplant, *matoke* (a.k.a. green bananas), lemon, lemongrass, pumpkin, *dodo* (a.k.a. spinach), *nakati*, jackfruit, and *sukima* (a.k.a. kale) for the staff meals, with leftover produce to sell.

In community garden news: This quarter 17 new families were identified as being in need of DIG community garden training and support. These families have received seeds and other plant starters (e.g., cassava stems and banana suckers) from DIG and from the communities themselves, and will now receive ongoing training in organic farming techniques, including soil management, plant and seed spacing, pruning, thinning, weeding, and creating and spraying organic pesticides.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted travel and transportation throughout the country, which has made reaching communities more challenging though not impossible. Despite coronavirus's lockdown impact on the country, the DIG team managed to start a large community-shared garden in Super Hole village to grow food staple crops like maize and soya beans. With local labor to help get the garden started, there is food security for this community for the future. Now more than ever before, this is incredibly important! Thank you DIG team for your continued efforts in the communities!



Physical therapy team Flavia and Rachel making a home visit.

were distributed this quarter. In addition, we provided 5,264 doses of Albendazole for de-worming to people in need, the majority being children.

Family Planning Outreach:

This quarter, 925 women received intermediate and long-term family planning through family planning outreaches. During these family planning outreach sessions, 862 women chose three-month birth control injections for intermediate-term family planning and 42 women chose birth control pills. 21 new long-term contraceptive implants were placed and none were removed. No IUDs were placed or removed. 19 women received counseling about side effects of birth control. 186 women requested pregnancy tests, and 4 were positive. 1,444 condoms

Between the Clinic and outreach, 1,115 women received intermediate and long-term family planning methods in the first quarter of 2020. The family planning teams continue to provide fantastic education and services both at the community level during outreach and at the Clinic. The demand for family planning services has never been more evident than during the coronavirus lockdown, during which a multitude of obstacles affected delivery of family planning, and yet services continued to be provided efficiently and well. Very fortunately, we have special permission to do these outreaches, and many women continue to come on foot to attend! Demand for family planning, both at the outreaches and at the Clinic has remained high! Congratulations to the dedicated team for making this happen. Thank you!

Domestic Violence Counseling

This quarter, at outreaches and the Clinic, 189 people (specifically, 154 women and 35 men) accessed Soft Power Health's domestic violence counseling services. These services consist of sensitization sessions at family planning outreaches, follow-up home visits, and consultations at the Clinic. The most frequently reported domestic violence issues this quarter, in descending order were: emotional violence (107 instances), economic violence (62 instances), and sexual violence (16 instances.) People coming for counseling often experience more than one type of violence. Community demand for these services continues to rise, and Florence, our dedicated counselor, works to ensure that she can reach everyone in need! With her help, many people are living in improved situations. Thank you Florence!

Thank you so much for your help making Soft Power Health's work possible. Now more than ever, we and the communities we serve really appreciate it!

To make a one-time or monthly donation, please click [here](#).