



# SIGN Education in 2018

## Kenya Regional Conference

By Lewis G. Zirkle, MD

In addition to the annual SIGN Conference in Richland, we hold regional conferences around the world. In February, SIGN traveled to Kenya to take part in a regional SIGN Conference hosted by Dr. Lelei and the staff of MOI University

School of Medicine in Eldoret.

### Education via Surgery

The first two days of the conference were spent in the operating room. Dr. Lelei had picked surgeries where he saw weaknesses or the need

for experience in his resident staff. The surgeries included pediatric and adult cases, providing teaching points on a variety of implants, approaches, and complications. *(Continued on page 2)*

# SIGN Education in 2018: Kenya Regional Conference

*(Continued from front page)*

Each case prompted good discussions. Performing surgery gives us all the opportunity to solve problems and come up with creative and effective solutions.

## Lecture and Hands-on Sawbones Sessions

The third day of the conference included lectures by Jeanne and me, as well as local lecturers. There was a lot of enthusiasm, and a lot was learned from the hands-on Sawbones sessions. Some of the residents did not know the proper SIGN Technique, so it was valuable to have the tools and simulated bones on hand so the surgeons could see the proper technique and immediately practice it.

The next day was dedicated to pelvic fractures. Dr. Sami Hailu, from Ethiopia, was one of the lecturers and did a wonderful job. I was so proud of him; Dr. Sami is the perfect example of the student becoming the teacher. The surgeons at the conference all gathered around him as they learned about pelvic fracture surgery. The surgeons in developing countries are now interested in more complex surgery, and we are working on new ways of supporting them.

I was pleased to see the improvement in surgical skills and knowledge of the surgeons from Kenya. Many surgeons expressed their appreciation for the education and donation of SIGN Implants and Instruments.



*SIGN Surgeons at the Kenya Regional Conference practice using SIGN Equipment with simulated bones, donated by Sawbones Worldwide. **SAWBONES®***



*Dr. Sami Hailu provides instruction about pelvic fracture surgery at the Kenya Regional Conference.*

## SIGN Surgeons Become the Teachers

Dr. Sami Hailu is a SIGN Surgeon at Black Lion Hospital in Ethiopia. Like many SIGN Surgeons, Dr. Sami is sharing what he has learned with as many surgeons and residents as possible. When he started his medical training, there were only a handful of orthopaedic residents in Ethiopia. After SIGN began working in the country, students saw how effective orthopaedic surgery can be in helping people, and the number of orthopaedic residents exploded. Black Lion Hospital alone is training more than 70 residents and partnering with other local hospitals to rotate residents and provide them with sufficient operating experience.

In 2015, Dr. Sami completed a pelvic fracture fellowship in Canada. He then returned home and has started the first pelvic and acetabular fracture fellowship in Africa. He has to perform pelvic surgery without the use of a C-arm, which is very complicated, but he has excellent results. His first student in the pelvic fellowship is Dr. Mapuor Mading, who recently completed the training and is returning home to South Sudan, where he will be the only surgeon in the country trained to treat pelvic fractures. At the regional SIGN Conference in Kenya, Dr. Sami led a course about pelvic surgery with Dr. Paul Whiting and Dr. Dan Galat.

# SIGN Education in 2018: Training Through Technology

SIGN is a worldwide organization, and we rely on a number of innovative technologies to report surgical cases, share information, and learn from each other.

Surgeons report each SIGN Surgery with x-rays and comments about the surgery on the SIGN Surgical Database. Each case is reviewed by Dr. Zirkle or a surgeon on the SIGN Board. The database provides an excellent opportunity not only to teach orthopaedic treatment of fractures using SIGN, but also a chance to encourage new surgeons and answer questions. The SIGN Database provides the opportunity to learn more about the fracture healing process. We are upgrading the database to make the teaching more interactive. We have created videos to illustrate common teaching points.

Learning throughout the SIGN Family is often communal as ideas start in

one part of the world and spread to surgeons in other parts of the world. The way that the SIGN Family learns together illustrates the adage that diversity trumps ability.

SIGN Surgeons are interested in treating more complex fractures like pelvic fractures. SIGN has set up an online platform so surgeons can draw on an x-ray image where he or she would place plates to stabilize pelvic fracture and upload the image. A mentor from the United States will comment about approach and placement of plates. After the surgery is done, the SIGN Surgeon sends post-op x-rays to the platform.

We hope to increase our education



*SIGN is developing online platforms that enable surgeons to share information and learn from each other.*

and interconnection among SIGN Surgeons by establishing similar platforms for deformity correction and other complex fractures.



*Dr. Paul Whiting (second left) demonstrates pelvic surgery at the Kenya Regional Conference. Hands-on learning with simulated bones helps surgeons retain information and develop surgical skill.*

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