

Upskilling in Papua, Indonesia

Training Papuan doctors in Jayapura, Indonesia to become self-sufficient in essential trauma management and basic surgical skills

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Dr Freddy Goo, a young Papuan doctor, travelled from Dogiyai Regency, Papua by foot for three hours, then by boat, then by plane to attend trauma training in the Papuan capital of Jayapura.

He would do it all over again for the opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills to improve patient's survival rates in the remote region, where he works under challenging conditions every day.

Many other Papuan doctors like Dr Goo made their way to Jayapura, the capital city of the Special Region of Papua in Indonesia from 17 – 26 of

for a total of 65 participants, and two Basic Surgical Skills courses for 100 young doctors stationed at health centres throughout Papua, West Papua and Maluku. Additionally, 30 new instructors were certified in a trauma management instructor course, enabling a way forward for training and transfer of skills within the region. This was phenomenal by Papuan standards as such training in other parts of Indonesia would normally only attract 2 to 3 Papuan doctors each time, due to the high costs of the training and travelling.

Thanks to Australian Aid, RACS supported the mobilisation of visiting faculty, materials needed for surgical skills practice and adult and paediatric manikins to use for ongoing training needs. This helped to defray costs tremendously for the participants, bringing the fee down to half what they would normally have to pay, plus the added advantage of not having to pay to travel out of their province.

Like Dr Goo, many young doctors were thankful for the opportunity to attend the trauma management and basic surgical skills training in Jayapura. Dr Charlie from Jayapura, who attained the highest score during the first trauma training course, was thankful for the more affordable cost. He explained, that for new doctors the cost of travel and fees to attend the same training in Bali or Jakarta would typically cost up to five times their monthly salary.

Dr Putu Ayu, a female surgeon from Timika who became a new instructor was very pleased to receive the instructor training. She looks forward to training many more young doctors to treat patients

and increase survival rates in outlying areas. They will be able to better prepare and stabilise patients for medical evacuation as many have to travel at least eight to 12 hours by boat to receive proper medical care and treatment. Dr Ayu said that the knowledge and practice gained from the course will help their skills, confidence and prioritising of treatment, with Dr Ayu and her team often treating casualties of tribal skirmishes. She looks forward to more training programs in the Papua region and the opportunity to learn from experienced instructors.

Immediately following the success of the course and with the enthusiastic new instructors, the organising committee has planned for the next trauma training program to be run in Sorong, West Papua this month, by the new instructors supported by a small faculty of senior instructors.

An Essential Pain Management course has also been scheduled for late July and an Emergency Management for Severe Burns course has been scheduled for September 2017 in Jayapura with 75 participants already signed up. RACS will work with the College of Surgeons Indonesia and the Australian and New Zealand Burns Association to support this important activity.

– Story and photo contributed by
Veronica Verghese

Basic surgical skills



March 2017 to attend urgently-needed training programs designed to upskill provincial doctors to become self-sufficient in basic surgical skills and essential trauma management. RACS Global Health was there to support the request of the Papua group from RSUD Jayapura (the regional general hospital of the Papua Province) in collaboration with the Association of Indonesian Surgeons and the College of Surgeons Indonesia, to witness the record turnout.

This milestone training event attracted 17 experienced instructors from Jakarta, Bali, Makassar (Sulawesi) and Ambon (Maluku), and the organisers were able to run two trauma skill and management training courses

Trauma Training

