



▲ CONCENTRATION: UK surgeon Karan Kapoor works with Vietnamese colleagues during an operation at Hà Nội's Việt Đức Hospital. Photo courtesy Sophie Wright

Vietnamese and UK medics prove that it's really good to talk

... PAUL KENNEDY & KIỀU TRINH ...

Sharing is caring. And that's exactly what doctors in Việt Nam and from the UK have been doing in a bid to improve health, enhance medical procedures and boost all-round knowledge.

A team of surgeons who specialise in ear, nose and throat treatment has been in Hà Nội to meet with local medics offering invaluable advice and know-how.

The visit was organised by UK charity Facing the World, who for

the past 20 years has been working closely with the Vietnamese authorities, arranging regular visits.

The highlight of the trip was a two-day conference at Hồng Ngọc General Hospital, offering opportunities for doctors to learn, exchange experiences and adopt new techniques in treatment.

More than 20 per cent of the population suffers from chronic rhinosinusitis each year, while head and neck cancers account for 10 per cent of all cancer cases.

With the rapid increase in these cases, improving the quality of diag-

nosis and treatment for rhinosinusitis and head and neck diseases has become an urgent necessity.

To address this demand, the International Conference on Updates in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Rhinosinusitis and Head and Neck Diseases was held on November 23-24, 2024 at Hồng Ngọc Phúc Trường Minh General Hospital.

This event provided an invaluable opportunity for medical professionals to exchange knowledge, enhance treatment quality, and collectively contribute to improving public health. The conference was attended by notable figures, including British Ambassador Iain Frew; Dr Hà Anh Đức, director of the Department of Medical Examination and Treatment Management; Assoc Prof Dr Lê Minh Kỳ, vice president of the Hanoi Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) Society; and Assoc Prof Dr Lê Công Định, also vice president of the ENT Society.

Additionally, the event brought together nearly 200 leading ENT specialists in Việt Nam and from abroad, as well as distinguished speakers from the Hà Nội ENT Society and northern provinces, the Facing the World organisation, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of the United Kingdom,

Facing the World – 20 years of dedication

UK-based charity Facing the World has been working to change lives in Việt Nam for the past two decades.

Hundreds of procedures have been carried out by visiting doctors to repair and improve the deformed faces of children and adults.

The collaboration between the charity and Việt Nam's medical professionals has developed rapidly and grows stronger with every mission.

Facing the World works in partnership with the hospitals of Hồng Ngọc, Việt Đức and Military 108.

During this latest trip, Facing the World and Military Hospital 108 extended their Memorandum of Understanding on medical specialist advisory and training programmes.

Katrin Kandel, executive director of Facing the World, said: "Facing the World has been active in Việt Nam for close to 20 years. We have a passion for helping the children who are born with facial deformities.

"This is all being done by up-scaling and training the Vietnamese doctors. We are working with three different hospitals and three different systems."

Dr Hà of Việt Đức Hospital added: "We believe that the collaboration with the 'Facing the World' organisation will bring many benefits to the development of our speciality in craniofacial surgery and aesthetic reconstructive surgery."

UK surgeon Karan Kapoor said: "I am working with Facing the World, a phenomenal charity I have been involved with for the last year.

"We are here in Hà Nội, we are working with the team here at Hồng Ngọc, and the wider Hà Nội ENT societies, trying to improve understanding about not only nasal disease, but head-neck disease, and to really collaborate with them and share some of the things that we've learned, and hopefully they can share some of the things they've learned and we can work together." VNS



▲ WISE WORDS: Consultant Rhinologist Nora Haloob addresses the conference at Hồng Ngọc Hospital. Photo courtesy of Hồng Ngọc Hospital

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▲ LINE UP: UK Ambassador to Việt Nam Iain Frew (4th left) and other participants at the conference. Photo courtesy of Hồng Ngọc Hospital

and the German ENT and Head and Neck Surgery Association.

ENT surgeon Karan Kapoor from the UK attended the conference. He felt it is an excellent opportunity to share knowledge globally.

“The fact is that around the world we are all learning and we want to accelerate that learning. We want to see what people in other parts of the world are doing and we want to share what we are doing,” he said.

“That kind of collaboration helps us all improve, and improve the outcomes of patients not only in the UK but in Việt Nam and that filters down to places where they might not have the access to the things we have in the UK.

“What’s really quite special here is everything has been translated from English into Vietnamese so even those doctors who might not have the ability to read the papers, they are getting that first-hand information from experts based in Hà Nội and from the United Kingdom.”

Nguyễn Xuân Quang, head of the ENT department at Hồng Ngọc Hospital, said: “Air pollution in Hà Nội is getting worse. This is a big problem that government agencies are trying to solve. The increase in air pollution is related to the number of people suffering from nasal and sinus diseases.

“About 20 per cent of people in Hà Nội suffer from mild to severe sinusitis, affecting the quality of life and increasing the need for early diagnosis and thorough treatment. On the other hand, head and neck tumours account for 5 per cent of all

cancers, due to the influence of the environment, food and genes.

“Doctors at Hồng Ngọc and other hospitals are very fortunate to work with leading experts in the world. Through this seminar as well as short-term and long-term courses, Vietnamese doctors have the opportunity to learn and update their professional knowledge. Both sides learn from each other.

“With the conference, Vietnamese doctors have access to new treatment methods and new research to apply in daily practice.”

This event was for much more than a one-way street. Medics from the UK were impressed with what they saw and returned home more knowledgeable.

“We can learn from surgeons here who do a lot more surgery because the population is so big. And so there are some things that they are much more experienced than us about,” UK-based ENT surgeon Peter Clarke said.

“But then there are ways of management that we are able to offer expertise around which hopefully they can benefit from as well.”

The visiting surgeons also spent time at Việt Đức Hospital, where they sat in on consultations and operations.

Dr Nguyễn Hồng Hà, head of the jaw and head surgery department at Việt Đức, said working with Facing the World has been a ‘win-win’ for everyone concerned.

“The team has helped bring leading experts in the field to teach and share their experience with Viet-



◀ TEAM WORK: UK surgeon Peter Clarke (right) and Vietnamese doctors perform an operation during the latest mission organised by charity Facing the World. Photo courtesy of Sophie Wright

namese doctors. After the team organises programmes to bring these experts here, there will also be aid programmes that support medical equipment so that Vietnamese doctors can practice and implement these new techniques,” Hà said.

“Before deploying these new techniques, Facing the World also organises trips for Vietnamese doctor teams to the United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, and other countries to observe and participate in surgeries abroad.

“With sufficient knowledge, practical experience, and supported equipment, we can fully keep up when these new techniques are implemented. Facing the World team has also helped bring the Royal College of Surgeons of England to

our hospital and has recognised the hospital as a global teaching centre of the Royal College of Surgeons of England.

“Because of this recognition and collaboration, we not only gain knowledge but also have the opportunity to transfer and train the younger generations of doctors in Việt Nam and throughout the region. In fact, doctors from Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia have already expressed their desire to come here for internships to acquire new knowledge in the fields of cranio-facial surgery and aesthetic reconstructive surgery.

“I believe this is a comprehensive and full development and collaboration that would be maintained. With such development, it will be very ef-

fective, contributing not only to our field in Việt Nam but even across the entire region.” VNS

*Additional reporting by Minh Phuong.



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