

2010 February 6

Well, I'm as far as the Hong Kong airport at this point after a 4:00 am alarm clock alert and two short flights already this morning.

This past week was quite the mix. Monday and Tuesday we operated on 26 major cases. Some surgical colleagues of Allan's and an anesthesiologist came down from Cagayan de Oro on the Monday and we were able to run 3 tables all day. On Tuesday we still had two tables running and finished up all the cases waiting for us by about 7:00 pm.... which did mean that Allan missed the wedding rehearsal he was supposed to be at. Oops!

The case I can't get out of my mind was the 33 year old woman who was our last case on Tuesday. Turns out she had a baby in December and thought for some time that the sore, enlarged breast she developed was related to her pregnancy. When it failed to respond to antibiotics it became clear it was much more ominous and she came to Bethel Baptist Hospital for further treatment after a period of being 'lost to follow-up'. We did a palliative mastectomy that afternoon in the hope of at least getting rid of the smelly mess and allowing enough skin closure and healing for her to be able to get some radiotherapy and chemo. (hopefully available through a government program.) We are so fortunate in Canada -- despite our wait-list fixation.....

Wednesday was a very different day as I had been warned shortly after arrival that there would be a wedding for me to attend. Bit of a problem, that, when you've brought scrubs, a few changes of slacks a T-shirts, and well-worn rafting sandals and running shoes. So-- up to Cagayan de Oro between projects for a hunt for dress shoes for non-Filipino feet! Not easy, I can tell you... then a skirt and stockings that they promised would cover my North American legs (no size advisories on Filipino hosiery), and with a blouse loaned to me I was ready for to make a respectable appearance at the wedding of the hospital pediatrician, (Leslie to those who know her). I gather such impromptu adjustments are just in the day's work.... It was really enjoyable to be part of a Filipino wedding celebration.

Thursday I headed over to Camiguin Island for a bit of R&R before leaving the sun and sand. So yesterday I was snorkelling over giant clam beds; today it's time to head back to Canada and and then hike some Tofino trails with Danielle before heading back to snow, sleet, or whatever it is Kingston has been dealing with lately. (And regular-type work as well, I suppose.....)

Alison