



special thanks from

FOCOS



The doctor examines Juma, a 15 year-old boy from Sierra Leone, with such an extreme curvature of the spine that it is crushing his heart and lungs and will soon kill him. He is already at the point that he can't do many of the things that most boys love to do. The doctor confirms that Juma is currently only breathing at 30% capacity and keeps losing weight because he can't breathe or function right. Then he adds, "If we leave him alone, he's not going to live too long."



Juma, has scoliosis, a life-threatening form. Many cases of these types of scoliosis result from childhood infections like tuberculosis or polio that actually penetrate the spinal vertebrae and cause them to swell and fuse together. Left untreated, the spine can become hugely deformed as a child grows. These children are often ostracized, ridiculed, and face painful, early deaths without treatment.

This is where Dr. Oheneba Boachie-Adjei and FOCOS stepped in. Dr. Boachie-Adjei was a malnourished young boy in Ghana when a western trained doctor stepped in and saved him. This experience influenced his outlook on life, and created a desire to pay-it-forward, giving others an opportunity for a new lease on life. With this in mind, Dr. Boachie formed the non-profit organization, The Foundation of Orthopedics and Complex Spine (FOCOS) in 1998 with the intent to improve the lives of children, teens, and adults in Ghana. Since that time, FOCOS has expanded into Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Trinidad, and Barbados, and in 2012 opened the 50 bed FOCOS Orthopedic Hospital in Accra, Ghana.

Severe Scoliosis deformity

Volunteer medical teams make trips into these countries where potential patients with complex spine deformities, clubfoot, joint replacement needs, and other spine disorders are met and examined. Once surgery has been deemed necessary, the new patients are brought to the FOCOS Orthopedic Hospital where they are cared for by 150 full and part-time employees and FOCOS volunteers. Volunteers for these trips come from different countries and are experienced and skilled in their various specialties. They conduct at least four mission trips per year, with 20-40 surgeries per mission.



FOCOS Orthopedic Hospital

If Juma were in the United States, his spine would be corrected over several surgeries. In the FOCOS hospital, there is probably only one chance to make Juma's life better. Medical care is paid for by charities and there is usually only enough money to bring patients to Ghana one time. In addition, these patients usually travel alone since there are not enough funds and most families cannot afford to make the journey with them. As a result, Juma faces this life-threatening surgery alone!

Fixing the spine requires working within 1mm of the spinal cord and risks total paralysis, and possible death. Only a few surgeons have the skills to perform these types of surgeries, and very few would attempt to correct a spine as deformed as Juma's. As he is taken into surgery, Juma closes his eyes to shut out the fear and his vision of the "big machines". Opening Juma up, Dr. Boachie-Adjei sees that Juma's spine is riddled with several bone spurs. He gently, snips them off and saves them to reintroduce later.

Dr. Boachie-Adjei and his medical team straighten Juma's twisted torso with so much force that they risk actually snapping his spine. Because of this, during the entire surgery, the pressure on the spinal cord is monitored closely to ensure that it is not stretched by even 1mm or Juma will not walk again. During the lengthy surgery, 14 screws are placed in Juma's crooked spine. Then the rods are introduced and four doctors wrench the rods into their final positions. As the rods are moved into place, the doctors are alerted that the spinal cord is showing a stress level that could be dangerous, and Dr. Boachie decides that he cannot stress the spinal cord any more. Juma's surgery will end before his spine is completely straight. It has been a difficult surgery. The medical team knows Juma will wake up straighter; they hope he will be able to walk.

Three months later, Juma is back in his village in Sierra Leone. He is standing much straighter, and he is walking. When asked how he feels, Juma responds, "Right now I feel happy. I think that people will just look at me and admire me, and not provoke me. That's what will make me feel normal in public. Dr. B....he's a good doctor."



Surgery Patients Enjoying the Beautiful Day

Juma is one more individual who can now stand straight, breathe better, feel good about himself, and lead a normal life.

THANK YOU MEDICAL EXPRESS TRADING!
Your part in helping Globus Relief and FOCOS fulfill dreams is appreciated!



One Family with Two Patients



Three FOCOS patients



Another Successful Surgery



Surgery in the FOCOS Orthopedic Hospital



Dr. Boachie-Adjei with some Patients



Some of the FOCOS Orthopedic Hospital Staff