

SHARING EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS FROM THE 20TH ISRRT WORLD CONGRESS WITH THE PROFESSION IN MALAWI

1. INTRODUCTION

The International Society of Radiographers and Radiological Technologists (ISRRT) held its 20th World Congress at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Trinidad and Tobago (T&T) from 12th – 15th April 2018 under the theme “WE CARE”. The congress brought together four hundred and fifty (450) delegates from its member countries. The delegates were able to share research experiences, learn from one another, and debate the current and future developments in medical imaging.

I was privileged to be among the delegates representing Malawi for the first time in the history of our nation. The objective of this congress was to bring Radiographers, Radiological Technologists and Radiation Therapists together under one roof to open dialogue on issues faced in the profession, technological development, and strategies on becoming more engaged. I was able to meet with fellow radiographers from different countries and also equipment manufacturers and suppliers. Outline below is a summary of some of the activities that I carried out in order to share with the profession in Malawi my experiences.

2. CONGRESS REPORT

The first thing that I did upon arrival was to compile a report on the congress. This included a summary of what activities took place during the congress and the lessons that I learned with particular focus to the challenges that the radiography profession is facing in Malawi. This report was sent to ISRRT.

3. WORKPLACE WEEKLY TRAINING SESSION

At the workplace, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital (QECH) I made a presentation on the my experiences and lessons learnt from the congress to the members of staff that comprise of a Radiologist, Radiographers, Radiology Nurse and Radiography Students from the Malawi College of Health Sciences. The presentation included the following topics; Brief outline of the objectives of ISRRT and the congress; Activities that took place at the congress; lessons learnt during the congress with particular focus to our Radiography profession in Malawi and the way forward.

4. ZONAL MEETINGS

The Malawi Healthcare System is divided into five health zones. Each zone has a Radiographer who is responsible for supervising the Radiographers working in the various hospitals in that zone. These zones have quarterly meetings during which the Radiography Supervisor visits the Radiographers to supervise and give support where necessary. I took advantage of this scenario to share my experiences with the zones by giving the congress report, a copy of the abstracts and presentation that was sent by the organizing committee of world congress in TT. In addition the ISRRT news and views for April 2018 was also shared.

5. EMAIL AND WHATSAPP SHARING

We have a WhatsApp group for all members of the Radiographers Association of Malawi and through this group I sent the following documents as part of sharing the experiences of the congress. For those that have not joined the association yet, I also sent these document via email.

- Conference report
- Scientific document containing abstracts and papers presented during the conference
- ISRRT News and Views for April 2018

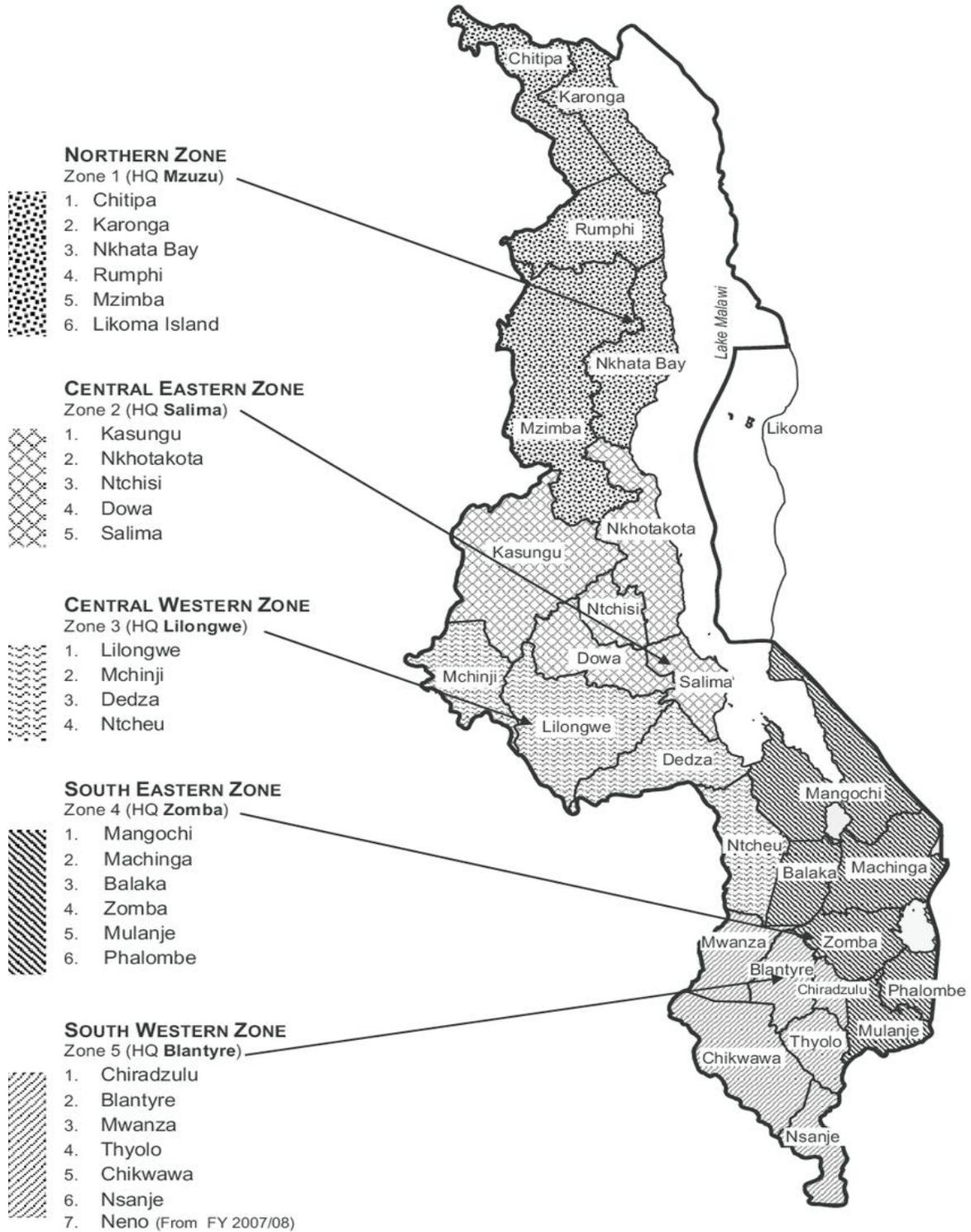
6. RADIOGRAPHY EDUCATION

The newly established public university Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) will start, for the first time in the history of Malawi, a 4-year training programme for Bachelor of Science in Medical Imaging/Radiography. In this regard the university is in the process of developing a curriculum. I had the opportunity to take part in the second phase of the curriculum development process from 11 to 15 June 2018. I was invited both as a Chairman for the Radiographers Association of Malawi and also as an experienced Radiographer. I took advantage of this occasion to propagate the ISRRT standards of education to guide the curriculum in the quality of care for patients and quality of education for the students.

Using some of the experiences from the 20th ISRRT World Congress, I was able to share with the curriculum development team pertinent issues such as eLearning and INTEREST-PBL and collaboration with other international universities.



Fig 1. Part of the audience at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital (QECH) in Blantyre during the sharing of experiences from the 20th World Congress of the ISRRT



Zonal Grouping of Districts of Malawi (January 2007)
Five Zonal Health Support Offices (ZHSO)

Figure 2 The Healthcare System in Malawi – Zonal Health Support Offices

7. ACTIVITIES THAT DID NOT TAKE PLACE

- Due to financial problems we postponed the Annual General Meeting of the Radiographers Association of Malawi to a later date. This therefore means that the presentation on the experiences and lessons from the congress will be made then.
- In the same vein the anticipated launch of the Radiographers Association of Malawi Newsletter did not take place due to financial problems since we could not manage to source the enough funds for the exercise.

8. CONCLUSION

For the first time Malawian Radiographers were represented at an international conference of the mother body of Radiography in the world. All radiographers in the country welcomed the presentations made and the so many lessons learnt there from. The quality of the abstracts at the congress was so educative that most radiographers especially those in training found them relevant and educative. In addition it has been expressed by members that during subsequent congresses many Radiographers should be allowed to attend and that sometime in future the congress could be held in Malawi.

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