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Trip Report

**Woubalem Zwede, MD**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Black Lion Hospital

Since the introduction of SIGN Nail Surgery in August 2008, the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Black Lion Hospital in Ethiopia has treated close to 400 patients.

SIGN surgery has become the best option in dealing with ever increasing numbers of trauma patients with long-bone fractures in adults, especially femoral shaft fractures. The surgery has proved to be effective in improving the fracture care of our patients.

The benefits of SIGN surgery from the patient point of view are immeasurable. It is really nice to see happy patients on follow-up. The surgery has helped to improve the quality of life of many patients particularly, young adults.

Since the application of SIGN surgery, the activity of the department has transformed totally. We were encouraged to plan to have more operating time which resulted in a high bed turnover. Thus the surgical exposure of our residents has increased. As a result, four general practitioners and 10 new applicants have already been accepted this year. Currently the department has 11 consultants, four general practitioners and 32 residents.

In a country like Ethiopia with limited resources and an underdeveloped health care system, it is encouraging to see the use of SIGN Nails in other hospitals within Addis Ababa, the capital city, and other parts of the country as well. The service has greatly reduced the suffering and referral of patients with long-bone fractures to Black Lion which is the only teaching hospital in the country.

We are grateful to the SIGN organization and Dr. Lewis Zirkle for giving us this great opportunity to be able to serve our patients.

When I look back at what we have achieved in the department I feel proud working with you all. We are where we are now because of the constant support and substantial contribution from SIGN. We are also grateful to the visitors sent by the SIGN organization and from other places too. GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

*Woubale Zewdem, M.D. is an orthopaedic surgeon at Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.*