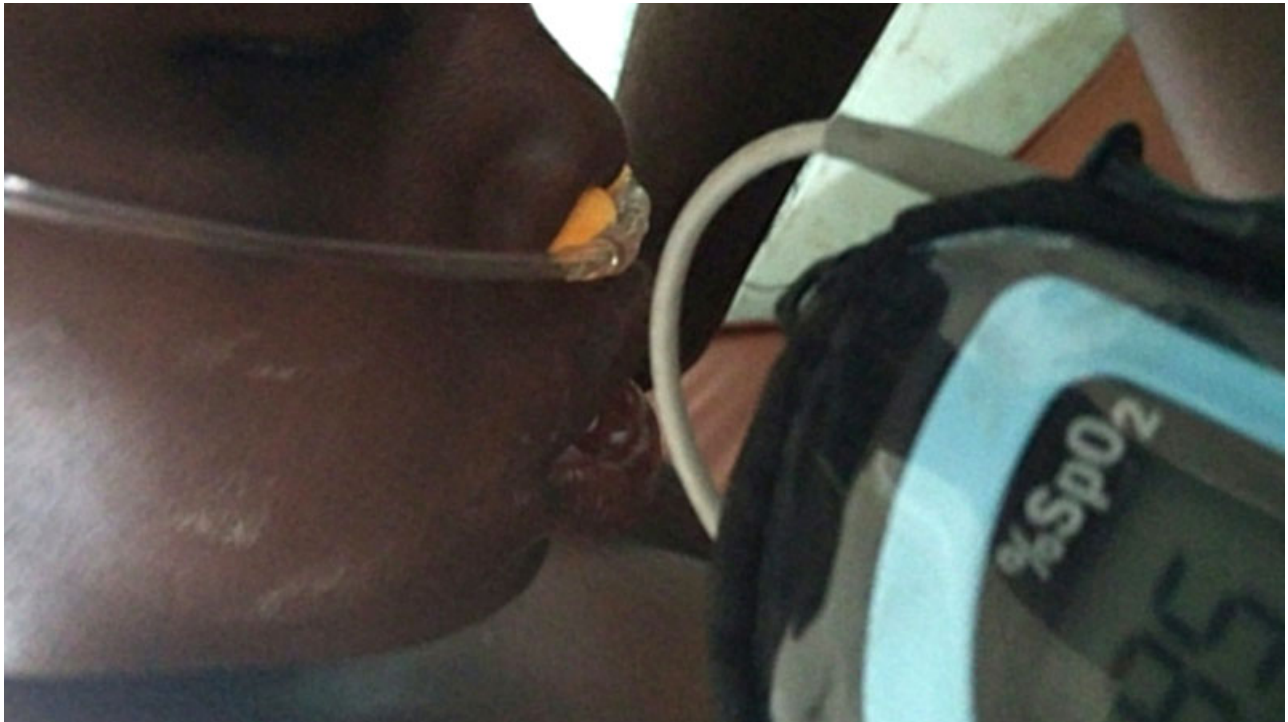


JOURNALS POSTED ON MAY 23, 2016

Air Hunger



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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The book of Isaiah records how the people of Israel failed to live out the kind of life God wanted them to live. God has always wanted His people to be a real, tangible blessing to those suffering around them.

Hunger

Here in Vanga we are frequently challenged with the great needs we see. Hunger takes many forms. People are spiritually hungry for peace and hope. People are physically

hungry because of the poverty and crop failures. Last week, I cared for a patient that was hungry for AIR. This 23 year old lady was in the emergency department here with a severe pneumonia. The patient was unable to pay for her antibiotics and continued to deteriorate. We helped pay for antibiotics and IV fluids so the patient could be started on appropriate initial treatment.

Air hunger

Air hunger is the feeling people get when their lungs are not working well. Either because the lungs are not able to get rid of enough CO₂ waste or are not able to adequately get enough oxygen into the body. This patient continued to deteriorate and was started on additional treatment for TB.

When I was asked to see the patient, she was wide-eyed in fear due to her air hunger; she was approaching death's door. Her husband at her bedside was doing all he could to encourage her. In Vanga we do not have ventilator that would helped by taking over this patients breathing completely and sustaining her until her lungs recovered.

A little science lesson

Air is made of many gasses and when the amount of the most common gas nitrogen (80%) is reduced by an oxygen concentrator machine, the percent of oxygen in the air goes up from 21% (normal) to about 90% when it comes out of the oxygen concentrator. Here in Vanga, we have one machine that concentrates oxygen.



Helpful training

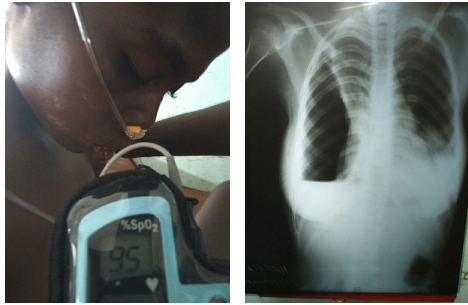
Our recent training in Greece with the Christian Medical and Dental Association included a course on simple tools that can be life saving. I was able to use that training to create a device to help save this lady's life. Although this patient was being given oxygen by a mask, it was not improving her situation. I ran home and got new oxygen tubing. I cut a foam rubber ear plug (like you buy at Walmart) in half. I attached the two halves to the two cannulas, the pieces that go into the patient's nose.



Near Death

When I arrived back at the hospital, the patient was gasping her last few breaths. She was slumped over and did not respond when I placed this device on her. This simple modification of the nasal cannula blocked the air from escaping out of the sides of the patient's nose and helped deliver the oxygen under higher pressure to the patient's lungs.

The oxygen concentration in her blood went from 55% saturation to a normal level of 95% saturation. The change was immediate and remarkable! Within 10 minutes, the patient was significantly better, responding to her surroundings and talking with her husband!!



Technical complications

In order to supply electricity to the oxygen concentrator, we use a small portable generator which is fairly economical to use. The electrical generator costs \$200 and gas to run it costs \$2/hour. Unfortunately, the portable generator failed after 48 hours of use, and we had to switch to the more expensive generator that costs \$8/hour to run.

Slow recovery

The patient's air hunger had been satisfied and she was weaned off oxygen over the next 3 days. She was able to maintain her oxygen saturation at a normal level (mid 95%) without oxygen.. She has been slowly recovering this week.

Conclusion

We ask you to continue to stand with us in prayer and financial support. Pray that God will show us the best way to provide low-cost quality care here in Vanga. Each month, we provide nearly \$2,000 in urgent medical care for the desperately ill patients here in Vanga.

For our initial budget, we raised \$500 per month for medical care for the poor, thus we continue to overspend our medical care budget. These decisions are always difficult as we can not help everyone, but we have peace as we confront these difficulties knowing that it is God's plan for us to spend ourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed. The passage in Isaiah continues with this promise:

***The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.***

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and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.*** Isaiah 58:11

Thank you all for your prayer and financial support.
Tim, Kathy and Nancy Rice