

Information Sheet for ASGE Members Considering Volunteering for AfrECC Project

Overview

ASGE has partnered with AfrECC (African Esophageal Cancer Consortium) to address certain aspects of esophageal cancer in Eastern Africa. Squamous cell cancer of the esophagus is the leading cause of cancer death in many countries in Eastern Africa. AfrECC includes medical centers in Eastern Africa, individuals and medical centers in the United States, the American Cancer Society, the Clinton Health Initiative, Boston Scientific and others. Several projects are ongoing, including genomic studies, epidemiologic studies, early diagnostic studies, and endoscopic therapies primarily with esophageal stents. Currently, physicians from the United States and Africa have been involved in training African physicians to place esophageal stents and to perform endoscopic procedures. The AfrECC-ASGE partnership is hoping to involve ASGE members and others in the projects, matching ASGE members' interests and skills with training needs at individual sites identified by AfrECC. If you are interested in learning more about this initiative and possibly volunteering to participate in one of the training programs, we invite you to attend a meeting at DDW[®] which will expand upon this information.

Who might be interested in the AfrECC Project?

ASGE members who:

- are interested in volunteering to participate in endoscopic training and education in Eastern Africa
- have endoscopic training skills
- have clinical skills for training in quality assurance, outcomes research, competency, etc.
- are interested in global health

What to expect when traveling to a medical center in Africa which is currently treating many patients with all stages of esophageal cancer.

- The sites are located in Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia – some sites are rural and some sites are urban
- A team of endoscopists with varying levels of skills (some are *very* skilled, e.g. the team at Tenwek in Kenya has placed more than 3000 esophageal stents)
- Residency programs at some sites include family medicine, surgery, and other subspecialties.
- Facilities vary both in terms of resources and endoscopic equipment available
- Some hospitals are mission hospitals and some are university hospitals

What are the goals of the trips?

- One goal will be for the individual volunteer to observe how hospitals in Eastern Africa manage patients with esophageal cancer. In some situations, the volunteer will be directly involved in training. On some occasions, that will relate to placement of esophageal stents. In other cases, he/she will help with training of general endoscopic skills. In still other cases, that may involve teaching more

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advanced procedures such as ERCP, EMR, or endoscopic ultrasound, if that is requested and the site has the appropriate equipment. The volunteering physician will often be asked to give a lecture. And in some cases, the first trip may lead to a longer-term relationship with a specific hospital and its staff.

What is the selection process?

- The goal is to match ASGE members with specific skills to certain sites in East Africa where training in these skill sets have been requested.
- A group of ASGE members affiliated with the project will work with the AfrECC Stent Initiative steering committee to make the selections after reviewing the candidate's application.
- In some cases, opportunities will open up on short notice, but the goal is to give applicants enough time to make plans well in advance of their trip.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the usual duration of the trip?

Usually 7-10 days.

Who pays for my expenses?

The individual is responsible for his/her expenses. They may have support from their institution. **Neither ASGE nor AfrECC will pay for volunteers' individual expenses.**

What are the approximate expenses?

Airfare to the African site, meals, lodging, local transportation, etc. Meals are of minimal to moderate expense. Travel once in the country may be provided and/or arranged by the host, but you should expect to pay for this yourself. Some countries have a Visa requirement to enter the country. The cost can range between \$50 - \$100 USD. And there will be local licensure fees, described below.

What skill sets will I need?

- Possess advanced skill levels in requested aspects of gastrointestinal endoscopic care and treatment.
- Ability to be flexible. *Please note that in each center there will be some variation in the trainee skill sets. In some cases they are competent advanced endoscopists and those cases you will usually be joining them in training endoscopists who have some less significant endoscopic skills. The trainees also have various experiences with placing esophageal stents. Available equipment may be limited, and daily schedules may change.*

Will I be the only trainer there?

In all cases there will be a host endoscopist, who is generally very skilled, and you will assist him/her with training others. In most cases there will be an experienced ASGE member who has participated in training in Africa in the past.

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(Some of these individuals include David Fleischer, Mark Topazian, Prasad Iyer, Mike Wallace, Rahul Pannala). It is quite unlikely that you will be the only trainer on your first trip to Africa; the ASGE-AfrECC team that matches volunteers and sites will try hard not to schedule such a trip.

What about licensure, malpractice insurance, and travel insurance?

Temporary licensure is required in most instances. The host medical center will assist with obtaining licensure which may take a few months. In most instances there will be a fee which usually ranges from \$200-\$500 US dollars. The cost of the fee is the responsibility of the visiting physician. Information about malpractice and travel insurance will also be provided.

Is it safe to travel to these sites?

International travel throughout the world has certain risks. State Department warnings may inform you about risks in specific countries. Dr. Fleischer comments, "I have traveled to East Africa on several occasions and I have never had a personal safety concern. However, I use common sense and utilize travel habits that have served me well in traveling to other parts of the world." Once in the country you will travel with a team of colleagues. Professional drivers are employed or recommended by the project; Check with your hosts about this.

Are there health precautions?

Depending on the area and time of year certain precautions may be needed for yellow fever, hepatitis, malaria, meningococcal meningitis, typhoid fever, and other infectious diseases.

Can I add personal travel onto the trip?

It would be common to do so. Some of the most remarkable game reserve parks are located in areas near the AfrECC sites. All of the major cities have connecting flights to other areas in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States. Family members including spouses or children who are teenagers or older can be accommodated at most sites, but this will need to be agreed to in advance by the individual host site, and all aspects of the family members' trip (travel arrangements, local accommodations, local supervision, safety, etc.) will be the responsibility of the travelers, not the host site.

When will the next opportunities for participation occur?

- 2021 – exact dates soon to be finalized

How can I learn more?

- Attend an AfrECC-ASGE meeting at DDW 2021
- Go to the AfrECC website, <https://dceg.cancer.gov/research/cancer-types/esophagus/AfrECC>
- Contact the AfrECC Secretariat: Natalie Pritchett, 240-276-6060, natalie.pritchett@nih.gov

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How do I apply? Send the below information to Redi Jakova

rjakova@asge.org

- Submit an abbreviated CV, letter of interest including skill sets
- Mention how the trip expenses will be paid
- ASGE member Yes___ No___