Medical Challenges in Sudan

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been sense of smell to detect the mines, but it is not as simple as it sounds. It depends on a lot of climatic features as well. APPOPO was founded in 1997 and has since discovered African giant pouched rats can detect explosive samples. It soon found that non-explosive rats can also find hidden samples of TNT buried in sand. However, it was not until 2005 that MDRs were used in a real minefield.

Adriana Adamo, who currently works for APPOPO as an MDR trainer, says, "When I started working for APPOPO, I only saw fully trained animals... that had been trained in Tanzania. It was the first time MDRs were brought into a real minefield, and we went all very excited and nervous. We work now with 18 MDR teams, all tested and accredited." Adamo has been working with APPOPO and its MDR program for three years. On average, Adamo works with 12 rats daily.

Originally from Limpopo, Mozambique, Adamo has progressed from working with fully trained rats to learning to train baby rats, herself. APPOPO recently insisted Adamo to leave her job in Tanzania, she says later during the three months she will be in Tanzania, she will be taught "to swim two babies from the first training" up to a level where they can walk on a string in the open, something independent training of targets is a sad exercise. This training provides me with sufficient skills on how to handle the whole training process, and teach others how to train rats." According to Adamo, the purpose of the Tanzania training course is to "learn the diseases of rat training."

"The idea is for [the rat] to get a strong and independent Mozambican MDR capacity. To reach this goal, APPOPO gives us the opportunity to learn all the aspects of an MDR program, especially the preparatory training stages, which we lack so far in Mozambique." Rats are also easy to train and tame, which is useful in detecting mines quickly. According to Adamo, "Rats work quite independently from their trainers. They depend only on their trainer’s potential affection" that they show, which allows the animal to be trained by people without much training. In addition, due to the small size of the rats, they are less likely than dogs or humans to cause damage on a minefield or an unexploded ordinance. They are also closely to the minefield.

In a real minefield, trained giant pouched rats usually detect 100 square meters of landmines within a half hour. Two trainers guide a single rat on a lead. While one trainer towards a rat for correct indication of behavior, the other trainer will note the rat’s behavior to ensure that the rat has indeed located a mine or piece of unexploded ordnance. MDRs show that they have located a mine or UXO by tracing the soil surface in the vicinity of the mine.

Adams thinks APPOPO trainers must be patient above all else when it comes to raising the new animals. "You don’t need to be a wizard to raise rats. You need merely need a lot of patience. And in the case of one of my animals has a problem that’s why I know how to deal with, there are always experienced trainers around to help me out," she says.

For additional references for this article, please visit http://www.mineaction.org/jma/article/325. See Evidence, page 112.

Working with Médecins du Monde, Dr. Kushner spent 12 weeks with a mission in Malakal, Sudan. This article, written as a journal, is his account of the first six weeks. Through his work, Dr. Kushner has helped many and witnessed the impressive ability of doctors in Malakal to work in stressful and sub-par conditions. He also came face to face with the cholera crisis and worked to get supply and support for a second Cholera Treatment Center site.

Using the impressive ability of doctors in Malakal to work in stressful and sub-par conditions. He also came face to face with the cholera crisis and worked to get supply and support for a second Cholera Treatment Center site.

I t is the end of my first day in Malakal, Sudan, and all that matters to me, the orange streaks accentuating the indigo bust of the clouds, darkness slowly descending after the sun, and the almost palpably silent. Across the river, a flat plain extends for miles. Leda grooves and there are no houses or signs of activity; it looks like a no-man’s-land. On one side, the stream looks like a line of activity is slowly commencing. Long, metal, canoe-like boats discharge their passengers or bound-up, bent canoes, and hako bundles of brushes, balsa and thatches—the building materials throughout the region. The pilots are stacked and travel in random patterns along the shore. Villagers and passengers agilely slide by, some climb into stilted boats and head further up or down the river to neighboring villages. Malakal, the city where I will stay for the next two to four months, it surrounded the gospel only a few years ago by south Sudan. In the capital of the Upper Nile state and home to more than 150,000 people. With a price agreement reached in 2005 between the south and north’s civil war that raged for more than two decades ended. Daily, more and more refugees return to the south seeking jobs and a way to rebuild their lives. They also return to unscarred numbers of lives.

But at this time of day, the Nile is quiet. Masses of green and brown seeds and other debris—small floating islands—float by. In the distance, a few hawks fly. "You don’t need to learn the names of birds, you just need to know how to deal with them," some of them have been seen in Malakal. But at this time of day, the Nile is quiet. Masses of green and brown seeds and other debris—small floating islands—float by. In the distance, a few hawks fly. "You don’t need to learn the names of birds, you just need to know how to deal with them," some of them have been seen in Malakal.
The presence of landmines all over the world is an issue the United Nations and other world organizations are trying to address. In some areas, the financial situation for obtaining supplies has deteriorated. As the situation in Malakal shows, the financial situation for obtaining supplies has deteriorated. To understand the landmine situation more clearly, I have also spoken with the UNMAS folks about making sure the victim data is incorporated into the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). For those of you who don't know, IMSMA is a global standardized database to collect information on landmines and minesfields; it also has a victim component. In addition, I am hoping to get a better hospital surveillance program on victim data established and have also written a proposal to get a baseline of surgical consumables in place so that when we begin to receive large numbers of landmine victims, that system will already exist.

Speaking with the head of the United Nations Mine Action Service here in Malakal, I find that once the rains begin and the ground softens, there will be a significant increase in the number of landmine injuries. In the past two months, there have been seven victims brought to the Malakal Hospital. I have operated on two; the soldier I wrote about above (whose thumbs I was able to save), and a six-year-old girl who required an above-knee amputation. A third child is also on the ward recovering from injuries she suffered after playing with a piece of unexploded ordnance. I was told the other victims were very severely injured and died soon after admission.

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Another Landmine Incident

Saturday night, while walking to our favorite grilled goat restaurant, I was informed about another landmine/UXO accident. I immediately went to the hospital and discovered a nine-year-old boy who had just been hit by a landmine and had a large piece of UXO in his side. One was dead on arrival, a second only suffered a few scratches. The other two had more severe injuries. One was yelling in pain, had a large chunk of his back and one leg missing, and was bleeding profusely. On the staff’s advice, we tried to save him, because of his age and because he was a child. The other boy had a penetrating wound to his left flank.

Now the pressure is on, with a large hospital in the background. There are several other hospitals in southern Sudan, and we have to be careful. There is a problem with the gunshot wounds, and the respiratory distress is very common. The only thing we can do is keep him alive until we can get him to a better hospital.

The Bad News

At the MSF Cholera Treatment Center, we have been receiving a steady stream of patients with cholera. A few days ago, one of our patients died, and we had to send the body to Juba, the capital. The problem is that we don’t have a morgue, and we have to keep the body in the hospital for a few days. We are now working with the local authorities to find a solution.

Getting Through CTC

The language barrier makes it difficult to communicate with the local people. It is hard to explain to them what we are doing and why. We are working with the local authorities to try to improve the situation.

The situation in southern Sudan is very difficult, and we are doing our best to help the people. We are working with the local authorities to try to improve the situation, and we are doing our best to help the people.
Working with Médecins du Monde, Dr. Kushner spent 12 weeks working for a mission in Malakal, Sudan. This article is his account of the first six weeks, written as a journal. Through his work, Dr. Kushner has helped many and witnessed the impressive ability of doctors in Malakal to work under stressful and sub-par conditions. Dr. Kushner also participated in the Cholera Crisis and worked on getting support and supplies for a second Cholera Treatment Center site.

**Overwhelming Cholera Crisis**

I did my turn at the CTC the following evening for the night shift. By this time we were all aware that the wheels were in motion to overwhelm the MSF site. Rausan (our field coordinator) had been in contact with the MDM headquarters in Paris and a decision was made to send an emergency wire to Malakal and set up a second MDM CTC. Monday was spent giving around town, trying to get support and material for the second site. As the surgery project is so small, our available resources and personnel are severely limited. In fact, we only have one vehicle. And this is white with the MDM logo on the side as all nongovernmental organization vehicles should be.

**News Brief**

“Colombia without Mines” Concert Held

Juanes, a South American singer-turned-activist, recently held a Colombia sin Minas (Colombia without Mines) concert. The event raised money to support Colombian children harmed by anti-personnel landmines. A native of the country, Juanes, performed May 24, 2006, at the Gibson Amphitheatre in Los Angeles, Calif. Also appearing were Alejandro Sanz, Ana Gabriel, Carlos Vives and others. The concert denounced the use of landmines, raised awareness of the landmine danger to children and provided assistance to children in need of prostheses.

Juanes is a long-standing supporter of mine action, and the concert was organized by his Mi Sangre (My Blood) Foundation. Other groups also pledged support for Colombia sin Minas. The Wheelchair Foundation agreed to donate wheelchairs totaling double the value of money raised through ticket sales. Sponsors for the concert included Univision Television, the Colombia Coffee Federation, American Airlines and Red Bull energy drink.