



# JDC-ETHIOPIA



## Spine and heart

International life-saving surgery program

2019 Report

## Dear friends and supporters:



We aim to straighten the backs, and fix the hearts of Ethiopian youth. At year end, we want to give you an update, thank you and ask for your support.



**History:** In 2006, we began work at Mother Teresa's Mission, treating patients with spinal deformities, heart disease, and cancer. In 2011, we expanded to Yekatit 12 City Hospital. In 2017, we moved to AaBET, a government trauma hospital. We hold clinic five days per week. All treatment is free.

**Chief Physician:** Rick Hodes, MD, MACP, internist trained at U Rochester and Johns Hopkins. CNN Hero, holder of 5 honorary doctorates, subject of book: This is a Soul: the Mission of Rick Hodes and films "Making the Crooked Straight" (HBO) and "Zemene."

**Patients and diseases:** Most are youths who hear of us from other patients, physicians and local TV. Spine: scoliosis 60% (idiopathic and congenital), kyphosis 35% (TB, congenital), Neuromuscular - 5% including old polio and neurofibromatosis. Hearts: Rheumatic and congenital. Cancer: Hodgkins, osteosarcoma, Ewing's. We love challenges: huge facial tumors, unusual deformities like Madura head, fibrous dysplasia of the orbit, huge ameloblastoma, hyena maulings.

#### Patient Numbers:

**Spine:** Increased from 20 new spine patients in 2006 to 410 in 2018. This year we should surpass that.

**Surgeries:** from 11 in 2006 to 95 this year + 10 magnetic growing rod procedures. We have done over 1,000 spine surgeries!

We are about to send 11 patients to Ghana.

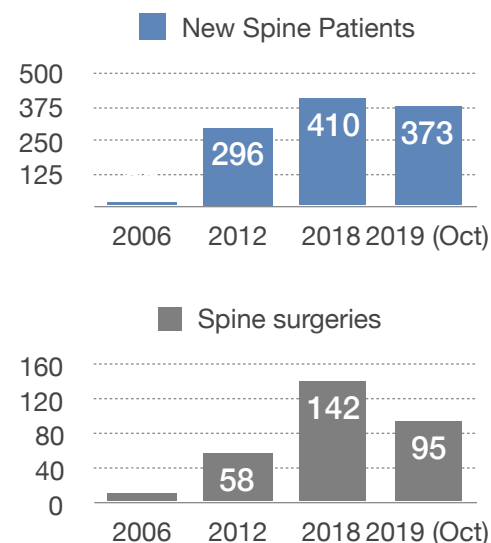
**Heart:** From 11 new heart patients in 2006 to 101 in 2018. We have done ~120 heart surgeries. We did 2 surgeries this year for children with Down Syndrome.

**Other** (often cancer): 32 patients in 2018.

The majority of clinic visits are returning patients for follow-up care. Since our patients have complex medical conditions, follow-up is critical to their success. **We have over 500 patients waiting for spine surgery!**

**Severity:** Most have spinal angles >100°. About 15% have horizontal spines. We've discovered new deformities: TT - tabletop spines, gamma spines, saxophone spines, alpha, and omega, and published in the European Spine Journal this year.

**Treatment:** Medical treatment is done locally. Cardiac surgery is usually performed at Amrita Hospital in Cochin, India. We do free INR blood testing to patients with artificial heart valves (thank you, Henry Schein!) and provide free warfarin to them. We are working to send a spine patient to Indiana, a complex knee and hand patient to Texas, and a boy with a huge facial tumor to Israel. In addition to local surgeons, spine surgery is performed in Ethiopia by visiting teams from Dallas, Chicago, Egypt, Rochester and Ghana. Difficult patients are sent to FOCOS Hospital in Accra, Ghana. Most go into ambulatory traction 23



hours/day for 4 months before surgery. Children get adjustable “growing rods”. We refer cancer patients to the university hospital in Addis, and we supply medication. Biopsies are analyzed at University of Rochester at no cost.

**Complications:** Several paralyses, 7 deaths (over 12 years), post-op infections, rod complications.

**Training:** We frequently have visiting students from America and Europe. Past volunteers -at least 10 are physicians - are now working in ophthalmology, international surgery, emergency medicine, and health policy. This year, Dr. Ted Belanger (Texas Back), Dr. Kamal Ibrahim (Chicago), Dr. Serena Hu (Stanford University), and Dr. Addisu Mesfin (University of Rochester) came to consult, teach and often operate and train Ethiopian surgeons. A former volunteer after college, Dr. Zvi Kresch, is now a Michigan ophthalmologist who has restored the eyesight to over 200 blind Ethiopians. A great new Ethiopian physician has joined us, Dr. Hassina, who is working with us for full-time training.

### Some of our successes:



Firkirte recently came to the JDC Ethiopian Spine Clinic to be seen by Dr. Rick Hodes and the staff for her six month check-up. She is doing very well.



Firkirte is 20 years old. As a young teen, she was diagnosed with tuberculosis of the spine. The disease caused vertebrae to deteriorate, her spine collapsed, and she had significant pain. One day she was watching local television and saw a segment on the JDC Ethiopian Spine clinic and Dr. Rick. She came to the clinic in 2017 for evaluation. That same day, Dr. Rick examined her and deemed her a surgical candidate. She was added to our list for local surgery. In May 2019, Dr. Ted Belanger of Texas Back Institute performed surgery at MCM Korean Hospital in Addis Ababa. Firkirte got over post-surgical pain within a month, and after that, it has been smooth sailing.



Firkirte is in her last year at Admas University College in Addis Ababa studying accounting. Her bright smile and straight back are a testament to our supporters. Thank you Dr. Ted, and thanks to our supporters for making this surgery happen!



**Magec Wand** adjustment is non-invasive procedure for our young spine patients with growing rods. An electromagnet is placed over the spine and the rods are lengthened in minutes without discomfort. Without Magec Rods, patients would need surgical adjustments. These are the first patients in Africa with magnetic rods.



Patients are never charged. We must raise \$10,000 for each heart surgery, \$29,000 for each surgery in Ghana including transport, and \$1,800 for cancer treatment. To provide treatment to our patients,

## Donations:

**www.RickHodes.org** goes into our budget line at JDC.  
**www.JDC.org/dr-rick-hodes** is an alternative.

## Mailing: JDC-Global accounting

220 E 42nd St. #400, NY, NY 10017

*Must be marked "Ethiopia Medical" to get to us.*

*Please help us! Money is our limiting factor in saving lives. Gifts are tax-deductible. Contact us about wire transfers. JDC is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization for tax purposes. Thank you for considering this request and for all you do to create a better world.*

Rick Hodes, MD, MACP

Medical Director, JDC-Ethiopia [www.Rickhodes.org](http://www.Rickhodes.org)

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## With gratitude: Main Partners and supporters:

