

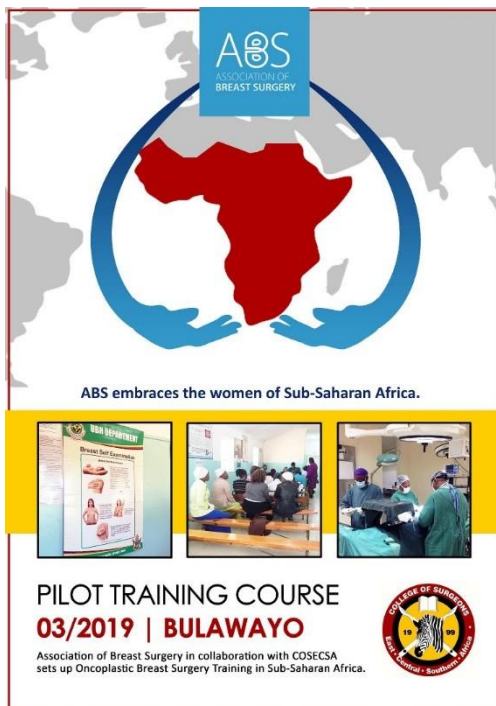
ABS INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

I am grateful to Miss Chagla and the ABS International Forum for facilitating my educational trip to the United Kingdom. The fellowship could not have been granted at more opportune moment.

The fellowship had two components, namely, an observership attachment and AGM attendance. The observership attachment was with Mr Rainsbury at the Winchester Breast Unit from the 11th to the 15th of June 2018. The AGM was at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham, on the 18th and 19th of June.

At Winchester I shadowed the team as they performed their duties in the one stop/ initial consultation clinic, the results clinic, the multi-disciplinary meeting, and in the operating theatres. I benefited immensely from the attachment experience.

In December 2017, Mr Dick Rainsbury made a presentation at the AGM of the College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA) in Maputo, Mozambique. In his presentation, he extended an offer for partnership whereby ABS was willing to work with COSECSA in setting up a skills transfer program in the area of breast surgery.



Surgeons from several countries responded to the offer to take part in the ABS training initiative. We the Zimbabwe –based surgeons feel highly favoured for our proposal to have the pilot teaching course in Bulawayo was accepted by the ABS’s International Forum.

The ABS training initiative comes at a critical moment for the Zimbabwean surgical fraternity. Breast cancer is the second commonest cause of cancer related deaths among Zimbabwean women. At its AGM in September 2017, the Surgical Society of Zimbabwe discussed the need to improve breast care services in the country. There is need for comprehensive screening as well as coordinated multi-disciplinary treatment.

In nearly all Sub Saharan African countries breast surgery is part of the general surgeon’s work. There is a realisation that we need to move away from the status quo to a place where we have dedicated breast care centres manned by appropriately skilled personnel.

Through my visit to the Winchester Hospital Breast Unit I got to see the kind of facility we should aim to have in Bulawayo. Indeed it is desirable to have “Centres of Excellence” in each of the countries of Sub Saharan Africa. There is a desperate need for organised best practice breast care service provision as well as research in the pattern of breast pathology in the region.

I look forward to partaking in the first ABS facilitated training session in Bulawayo in 2019.

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