

GCMA and Splugchnizomai

By Dr James Fink

My open letter of thanks to GCMA colleagues for assistance in 2015.

In June, I was able to bring the resident doctors (Arnold and Grace) from Kirakira Hospital in the Solomon Islands along to the joint GCMA/Fiji College of GP's college in Denarau. Drs Arnold and Grace were embraced by many members of the GCMA and were very grateful for the opportunity to be a part of that function.

Just this past week, I once again connected the GCMA with Kirakira, Solomon Islands. A 6 year old boy named Belvin (accompanied by his parents Betty and Sam) came to the Gold Coast for a medical review. Betty is one of the long-serving midwives at the Kirakira Hospital, and Belvin is her son who unfortunately developed hydrocephalus after an episode of meningitis several years ago. Belvin also bears the second burden of blindness.

There is no access to imaging in the Solomon Islands beyond plain x-rays, and, there is no access to medical or surgical subspecialty services that could be helpful in diagnosing or proposing treatment for Belvin's neurologic conditions.

Fortunately during Belvin's brief visit to the Gold Coast, he was able to undergo investigations including and MRI through QSCAN Southport organised by Drs Hal Rice and Peter Jackson (photo). A day later, Belvin was across the road in Dr John Kearney's Eye Surgery where he underwent a thorough eye examination (photo).

Finally, Belvin was seen by the Dr Withers team of Teresa and Stephen at their offices in Pindara (photo). There was no charge for any of these services.

Belvin was diagnosed with stable communicating hydrocephalus and irreversible visual loss.

While these are unfortunate diagnoses for this young boy and his family, this process provided a lot of reassurance that there was nothing else more sinister going on with him.

Before departing, Belvin also had a visit with Vision Australia and the



Belvin and his parents with Dr Hal Rice, Damien Holden, Dr Peter Jackson and Jacqueline Tollemache of QScan.

Narbethong School for the blind, both in Brisbane. This way he and his family left not only with clarity of diagnosis but plans for ongoing management.

Splugchnizomai (splugkh-nid'-zom-ah-ee) is a Greek word for the feeling of compassion. With the root splugcha meaning "noble viscera", this word implies the virtue of compassion as ...emanating from the depths of a person's being.

On behalf of Belvin and his family, I would like to say that I am very grateful for the Splugchnizomai and kindness of the many health providers who took time out to assist with Belvin's care during his visit to the Gold Coast.

Yours sincerely, James Fink



Belvin with his walking stick provided by Vision Australia



Drs Stephen and Teresa Withers with Belvin and his parents, Betty and Sam



Belvin & Betty with Dr John Kearney