

Brian and Jackie Chilvers

Rain, Rain, Go Away...

August 2022



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It already seems like ages since we were in the UK, we have been back in the routine of 'Chad life' for about 6 weeks now. We did find the transition back to the routine here a little challenging, not least the early mornings(!) and very high humidity levels, though a warm welcome from our friends and colleagues here helped. One friend bought us some fish and chips Chadian style the day we arrived back, when you know someone has so little its humbling to receive such a gift.

We know the next few weeks will be tough from our experiences last year. The rainy and malaria seasons seem to have started early, Brian is regularly seeing children with very severe malaria being brought in for treatment, some have recovered well, sadly some were just too unwell.

There have also been a high number of malnourished children admitted during August, the severity seems to be worse in some children. We have also seen several cases of whooping cough in children who are already malnourished – in all cases the children had not received their routine immunisations. There is no system for 'call up' as there is in the UK, so it's a case of the parents (often mothers) being willing to or remembering to bring their children for vaccination. One such child, a little girl of about 2 years old, who was also suffering from severe acute malnutrition became very unwell, and she began having seizures which we struggled to control. It was decided to transfer her to a hospital in the capital which has a unit for more intensive care. The parents weren't sure they would be able to afford the care in another hospital, but finally a relative was able to help. Here in Guinebor we have a pretty old ambulance, and Jackie accompanied the child on a very bumpy ride through flooded roads to the hospital in town. She was in a critical state but survived the transfer and was admitted. Our Chadian colleague has been able to keep in touch with the father by phone and she gradually

recovered. She was discharged, but as far as we can tell has not received any follow up treatment in terms of her malnutrition (the family had wanted to come to Guinebor II for that, and despite making contact we have not seen them yet).

For us a huge challenge is the amount of rainfall and flooding on the route we would normally take into town. We did ask the hospital driver to sit in the car and show us a good route but the idea of what is too deep seems to be a little more conservative for us! We have plenty of supplies but it gets a little isolating staying on the compound too much. But on the 'up' side the temperatures are a little cooler and we have enjoyed some games in the evenings sometimes with others who live here.

The rainfall has been very heavy this year, the locals agree with this. Rain has been prayed for by those of all faiths here, but with limited infrastructure it causes lots of damage, prevents people from travelling safely and in some areas of Chad there has been loss of life.



The challenges for our Chadian friends are much greater than for us. Many have homes that are damaged or lost due to flooding. The same friend who gave us food the day we arrived has since lost his home and all his possessions, including important papers when his small home filled with water during a downpour. A school was made available for those affected in the community to sleep in. We were amazed at his faith – during the night, when he could not sleep due to children crying he told us how he just thought 'at least I can pray and praise God'. Faced with this and many other challenges he experiences daily we thank God for his strong faith at a time he could be asking "Why" as we may well want to do. He has had to rent a different home, which is at a lower risk of flooding but whose price tripled due to the demand.



An encouragement for us both is that some small but important changes that we encouraged in the clinical setting have continued while we were away – such as cleaning routines and certain immunisation decisions. Also the eye clinic has continued to run smoothly.

We are thankful that people have continued to attend the hospital despite the difficult journey -such as one mum who came part of the way by boat (a kind of dug out canoe called a 'pirogue') to attend the malnutrition appointment for her child.

Brian will be taking on slightly new role from September – working one on one with a nurse in both the consultation clinic (more minor or chronic illnesses) and his usual Urgences department. Brian hopes that the nurse will further develop examination and assessment skills, and have a more holistic view of the patients. This is something he has been looking forward to but will no doubt bring unexpected challenges!

Please continue to pray for the political situation, there are important talks happening at the moment which may impact the future of Chad.

Please pray for those Chadians who have lost homes and possessions.

Pray for the safety of our hospital colleagues who navigate the difficult roads daily to get to and from the hospital by bus, motorcycle, taxi or on foot. Also for our BMS colleagues who have to take their children to and from school daily.

Finally we would appreciate prayers for the busy month ahead, for physical, mental, emotional and spiritual energy and wellbeing.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers –while on home assignment it was so humbling and encouraging to meet many of you who give to BMS and/or pray for us regularly in person, but we appreciate each and everyone of you whether we have been able to meet in person or not.

Blessings,

Brian and Jackie

If you would like to support Brian and Jackie Chilvers by prayer and committed regular giving, visit bmsworldmission.org/partners or call 01235 517617 for a 24:7 Partners leaflet.

