

Elma's e-musings
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Have you ever suffered from 'White Coat Syndrome'? It is said that patients have sudden elevation of blood pressure, heart rate and researchers believe it to be due to anxiety. But when you have befriended your health care provider, you trust them that it's enough just to talk with them. Even a vitamin pill can take care of the headache. That's the placebo effect for you. In pediatric surgery, I have more than 1 patient. I have the parent/parents and sometimes the grandmother. These all react to the white coat.

Last Tuesday was a noisy day at the clinic. The 2 weeks previous, we were very busy operating on children with hernia or cryptorchidism (undescended testes) on both sides. A 3-y/o girl with right inguinal hernia, I operate on both sides. Three boys ages 2, 4 and 5 yrs had right & left undescended testes. So that's actually 8 procedures on 4 patients. Actually 9 operations because one boy's mother requested for circumcision as well. They all came back last Tuesday. At the reception, all the parents were happy catching up and swapping post-operation stories while the children are slightly calm. Well, they are not crying! But you can see their searching eyes... looking here and there, expecting to see the villain. When at last they come into the clinic we see a transformation. The calm kid starts crying and don't walk to walk in. It worsens when we ask them to lay down in the examining table. Hahaha, all my Sunday school teacher's voices are summoned into the room. Coaxing, role-playing, story-telling are armaments so I can examine the child. It's so different with the mother. If on early visits they were fearful, on follow up they are full of tearful smiles and gracious thanks. It is so rewarding! And I also got a 'thank you' cake

Also this month we've had 4 babies born with problems with pooping. Two had possible

Hirschsprung's disease- I'm not going to repeat myself, I've told about Hirschsprung's before. One had a lazy intestine associated with prematurity. One baby had no hole in his anus, and also suffers from Down's syndrome or Trisomy 21, commonly called Mongoloid facie. These babies are usually borne by older mothers, although young moms can have Down's baby. These babies look similar because they share common features. It's not yet known how and why, but they have an extra chromosome 21. They are usually bigger but lighter and have high incidence of other congenital defects involving heart, kidneys, brain and intestines. This boy had imperforate anus. We must wait at least 24 hrs before we can take the x-ray to see the farthest point of the colon in relation to the supposed anal opening. If it's less than 1 cm bowel-to-skin distance, we can go for straight operation (anorectoplasty) of creating a hole. If it's more than 1 cm, we proceed with colostomy first, followed by the anorectoplasty after 6-8 weeks. This boy had a good distance so I proceeded to straight anorectoplasty- something they have not seen before because they have had no Pediatric surgeon for a long time. So the theatre was full during the procedure because they wanted to see how it's done. I'm very happy to be able to manage this patient well, teach my resident and demonstrate to other senior surgeons that it can be done with good patient selection. This patient & parents too came last Tuesday. They were very thankful that their son is now pooping happily. Please pray for more opportunities of service- patients and their family members.

My church is celebrating 113th founding anniversary and we rejoice for God's faithfulness over the years. We have outgrown our building and really not safe anymore so we are embarking on purchasing a bigger property and build a bigger church. A very ambitious plan but we believe this is the way to go and we are working towards this. Anyway, we have a month-long celebration with different speakers for Sunday worship and midweek services.

Please pray for me as I prepare a message for Feb 26 midweek service on the church with a heart for excellence and fruitfulness.

Thank you to all who have sent me Christmas and birthday blessings. You are so loving and kind to me. Thank you for your prayerful support.