

Inaugural Asian Paediatric Ethics Conference 2nd and 3rd October 2023



Symposium 1 speaker

Dr William Housworth
Chenla Children's Healthcare, Cambodia

Dr. William Housworth and his (not present at this conference) wife Dr. Lori Housworth are both board certified in Internal Medicine and Pediatrics. They also hold MPH degrees from Harvard, William with a focus on Humanitarian Studies and Lori on Infectious Diseases. They have lived and worked full time in Cambodia since 2008. Initially Bill directed the Angkor Hospital for Children in Siem Reap, where Lori founded and ran the sexual abuse clinic. They together subsequently founded Chenla Children's Healthcare www.chenlachildren.org in 2016 with the aim of helping correct some of the extreme outcome disparities seen in pediatric healthcare in the most rural provinces of Cambodia. They have worked in collaboration with NUH throughout their time in Cambodia.

Presentation title: Advanced medical care for rural communities

Abstract

Over the past 15 years in Cambodia, great strides forward in child health have been made. The under 5 mortality rate has dropped from 83/1000 live births to 16/1000 live births. Yet very large health disparities remain for rural provinces. Mondulikiri, Chenla Children's Healthcare's newest hospital site, still has an under 5 mortality of 41/1000 live births. Rattanikiri our planned next province has an under 5 mortality of 43/1000 live births. Each is 7 hours away from Cambodia's capital of Phnom Penh by ground and there are no flight services. Quickly diagnosable and treatable ailments such as sepsis, melioidosis, pneumonia, dengue and other infectious diseases take their toll. Trauma from motto accidents and other forms also needlessly take their toll. But the notion of providing high quality advanced medical care in such rural communities brings up many ethical dilemmas. What is the best utilization of resources - care on site versus transporting to other higher level centers in the country? What level of quality must be assured to even get started? How should improvements (or failures) be measured over time? Is it "sustainable" even if we have success?

The purpose of this talk is not to give firm answers to these questions but rather to keep the discussion going as Chenla Children's Healthcare with NUH support continues to expand in Cambodia with an interest in replication of our public-private NGO model in other countries in the region as well.