

Profile of the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital, Juba, South Sudan

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The Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital was established by the Kuwait Government in 1983 and is a government hospital under the Ministry of Health, Central Equatoria State. It is located along Unity Avenue, Juba.

Early in 2017, the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at Juba Teaching Hospital (JTH) was moved to Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital (excluding the Nursery which is still in JTH but administered by Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital).

At the moment, Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital is the only functional paediatric hospital in South Sudan, receiving patients from all parts of the country and giving clinical training to students from both public universities (University of Juba and Upper Nile University) and private institutions (for Nursing and Clinical Officers).

The department has different cadres that work hand in hand, smoothly and with a good team spirit for the benefit of the patients. Currently, there are twelve Paediatricians, twenty two Medical Officers (GP), eight Clinical Officers, three Pharmacists, six Pharmacy Assistants, five Theatre Attendants, seventeen Laboratory Technicians, eight Registered Nurses, forty six Certified Nurses, six Nutrition Officers, three Social Workers, seven Human Resource and Record Officers, two Public Health Officers, five Accountants, seven Statistic and Data Analysis Officer, two Vaccinators, four Electricity Officers, four Guards, three Police Officers/ Security, five Labourers, twenty Cleaners and one Driver. See Figure 1.

The core work of the department is to conduct daily clinical ward rounds, weekly major ward rounds and monthly grand rounds which are usually done in collaboration with other departments from Juba Teaching Hospital. Being the only paediatric hospital in the country, majority of the lecturers in the public universities are also staff of the department of Paediatrics and Child Health at Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital. Therefore, orientation, mentoring and teaching of junior doctors to acquire knowledge, clinical skills and to build their careers are the most important activities of the department.

Besides teaching, the department also organizes weekly continuing professional development (CPD), quarterly mortality audits for the different wards (General, Gastroenterology, Nutrition, and Neonatal) and weekly referral clinics for neonates and general paediatrics.

Currently, there is no ongoing research at the department but there are several proposed topics such as:

- Factors associated with neonatal outcome at Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital.
- Prevalence and factors associated with neonatal sepsis at Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital.
- Prematurity and associated factors at Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital.

The department needs funding to be able to carry out these research studies.

There is no short-term attachment of overseas medical students at the department,

Citation: Madison. Profile of the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health, Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital, Juba, South Sudan. *South Sudan Medical Journal* 2022;15(3):118-119 © 2022 The Author (s) License: This is an open access article under [CC BY-NC](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) <https://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ssmj.v15i3.11>



Figure 1. Some of the staff of the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health (Credit: Abraham Dut)

but it would be good to establish such collaboration to improve productivity, share experiences and explore opportunities for research and funding.

The aspiration for the department is to establish more specialized clinics such as Sickle Cell, Diabetic, Chest, Cardiac and Neurology clinics. Most paediatric patients from Juba and different parts of the country are attended to at the department; to provide holistic care to the children we need to established other departments like Paediatric Surgery, Otorhinolaryngology Surgery, Radiology, Physiotherapy and Dermatology.

Establishing a Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology with a modern Neonatal Intensive Care Unite Nursery (NICU) would make a significant impact on the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at Al-Sabbah Children's Hospital.

The laboratory at the department can do only basic investigations including routine tests, haematology, and chemistry. Thus, expanding the laboratory with more diagnostic investigations would improve the care of children in the hospital.

Furthermore, the bigger dream of the department is to have sub-specialized training for the general paediatricians currently practicing in the hospital. This would have a positive impact on the quality of care offered at the hospital. To achieved this, the department may need external support.