

Rotary Doctor Bank Finland RDBF

Some notes on improving the
usefulness of visiting doctors for
Tanzanian hospitals

What is Finland?

- Finland is a Nordic country with about 5 million people; area is about one third of Tanzania
- Finland itself developed rather late, being a poor agricultural country until 1950s
- Finland had never any colonies in Africa or elsewhere
- Because of long winter, people have learned to plan ahead and be systematic: no food or firewood storage for winter meant sure death; eating seed-grain meant death the next year



Finland

5.4 million people

338 000 km²

Cold climate, 4-6 months snow

Poor agricultural country until 1950s

Tanzania

45 million people

945 000 km²

Tropical country

Poor now, plenty of unused resources



Lessons on Finnish health care

- Child mortality was terribly high in Finland still in early 1900s
- Professor Arvo Ylppö organized a general maternal and child health care system starting in 1920s
- Nurses were trained for preventive work and they started
 - measuring basic things like length and weight of pregnant mothers (up to 12 visits) and children (up to 8 visits first year, 4 second year and yearly up to school age)
 - giving advice in hygiene and nutrition of babies
 - vaccinations
- What followed was a dramatic drop in child mortality

Lessons on Finnish health care



Fig. Suomen Kätilöliitto

Basic things during pregnancy and childhood

Length, weight etc measured

Advice in hygiene and nutrition

Vaccinations

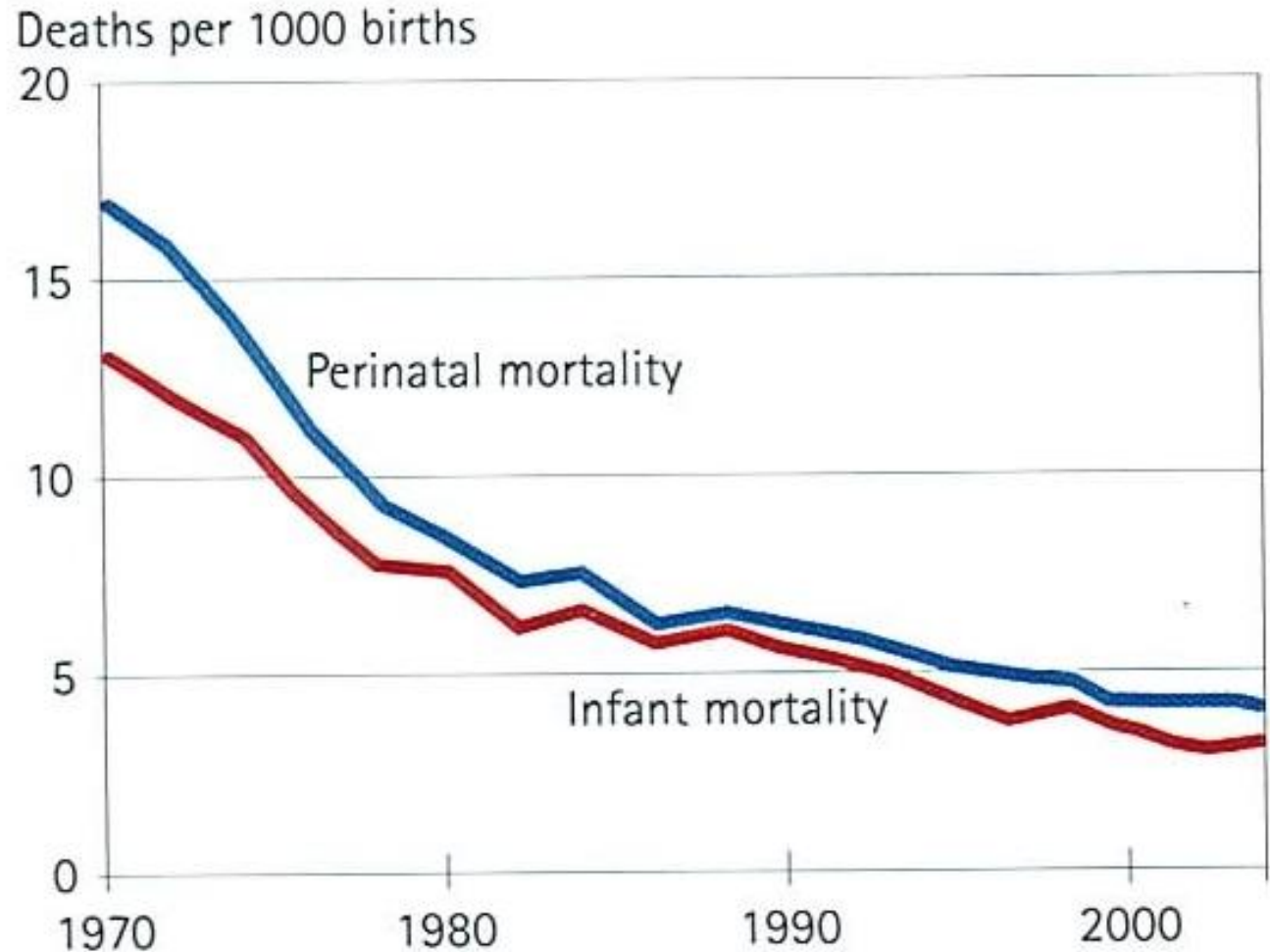
Child deaths decreased dramatically



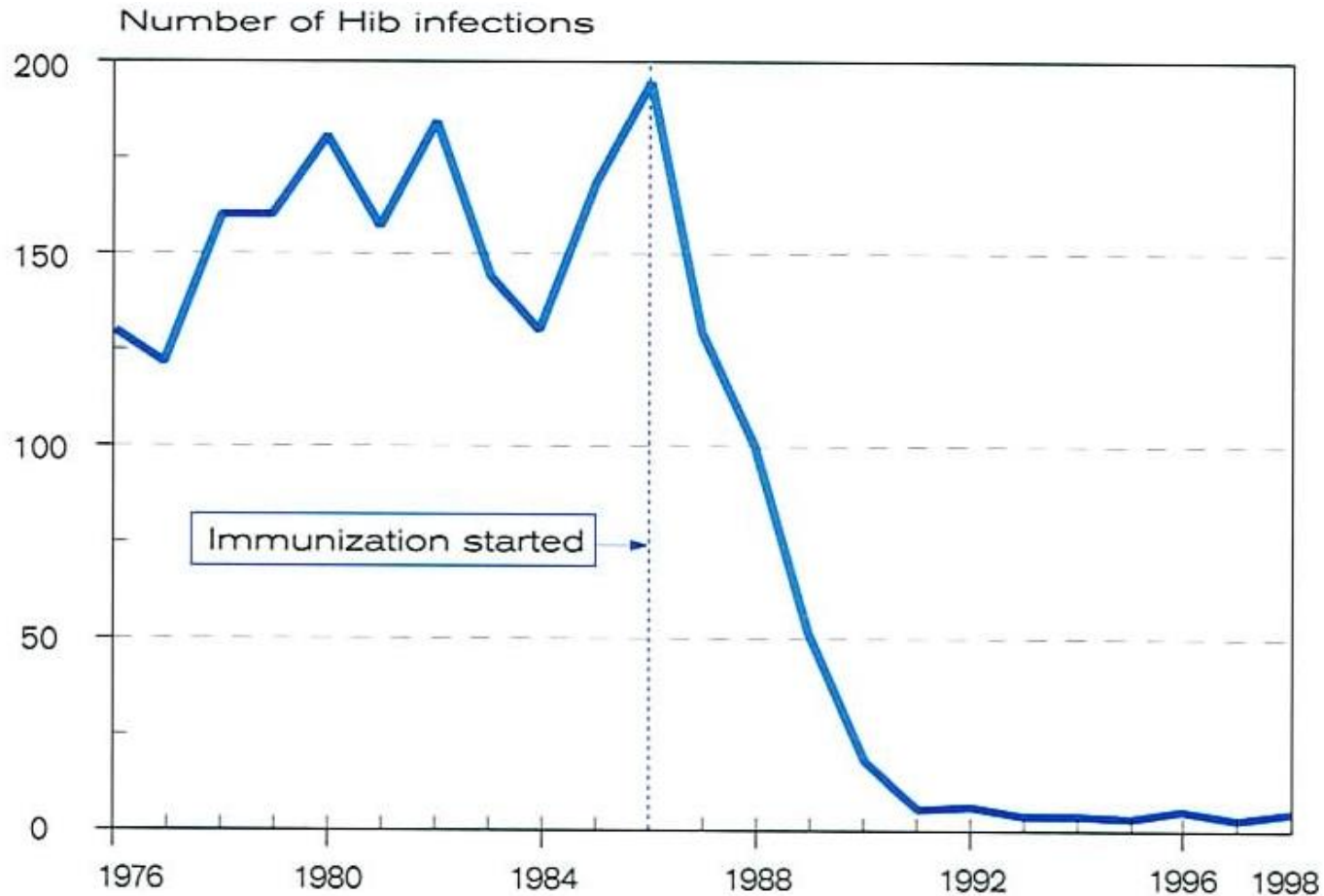
Fig. Pilttipiiri

Child mortality in Finland 1970-2004

In the early 1900s more than **20 %** of infants died before age 5 (**200 per 1000**)



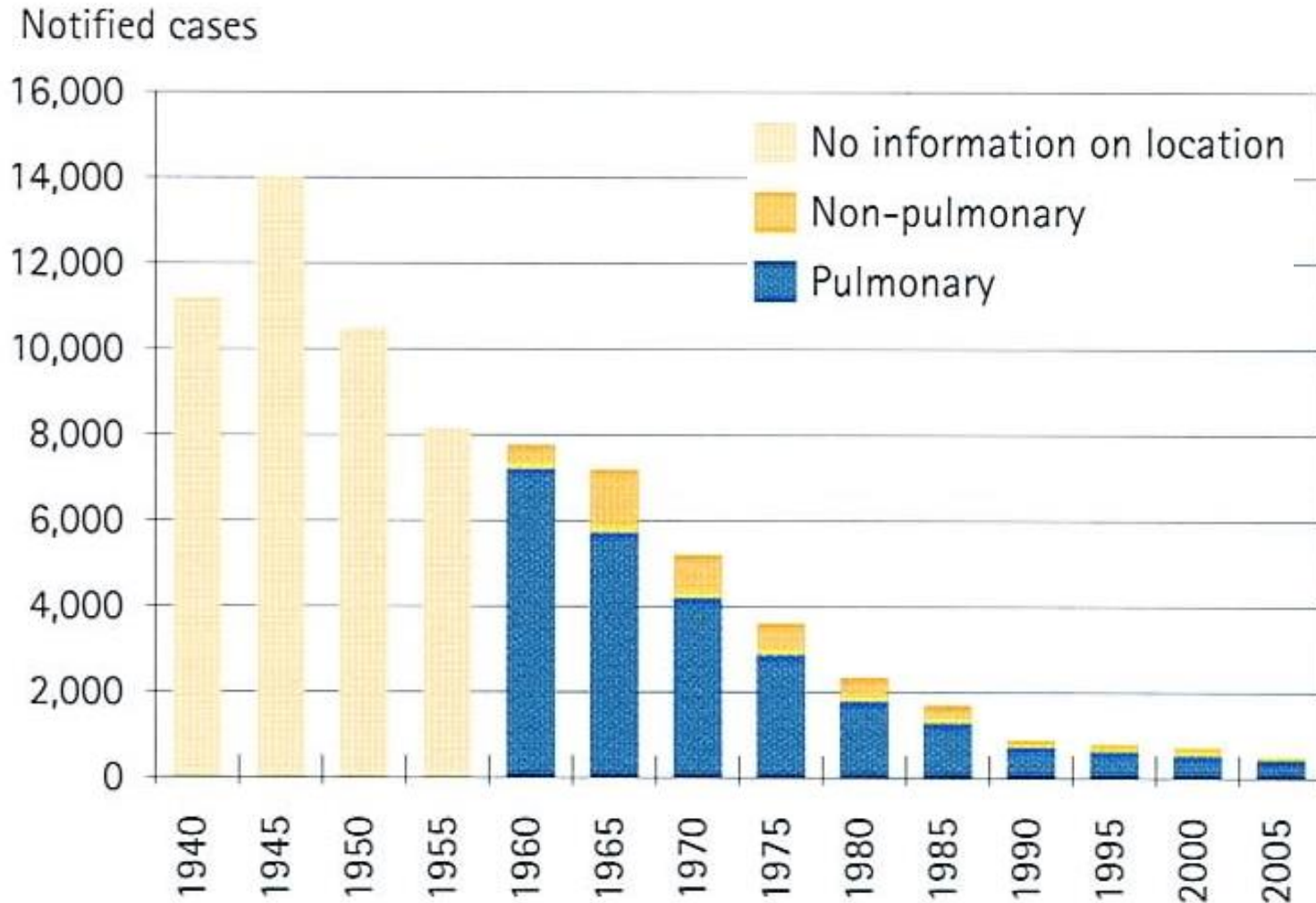
Haemophilus influenzae infections in children after start of vaccinations



Source: National Public Health Institute.

New cases of tuberculosis in Finland 1940-2005

decrease started prior to drug treatment in 1950s



Lessons to be learned

- Preventive measures are even more important than medical treatment
- Many of the improvements are simple (hygiene, nutrition, vaccinations)
- Education highly important, health workers but also mothers
- Trust is essential, if there is no trust there is no improvement

What is RDBF?

- We are an organization of Finnish Rotary Districts to recruit volunteer doctors for work in developing countries
- Doctor Bank means a **pool (=Bank) of doctors** who are able and willing to serve for humanitarian aims in developing countries
- Rotary Doctors are **volunteers** who are not paid salary

Why are we doing this?

- Our primary purpose is to help people
- Some doctors have a Christian conviction to help fellow human beings in need, others may work on a general humanitarian basis
- Some doctors are retired, many others use their vacation to work for some weeks in Tanzania
- This means Rotary Doctors are willing to lose some money and give their time to help the sick people

How do we organize this?

- RDBF is a team of the Finnish Rotary Association
- All members of the management team are also volunteers, nobody is paid a salary
- The main purpose of the team is to help volunteer doctors to find the working field
- The team also negotiates with local hospitals and arranges visas and work permits with help of the Service Office of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania

Who are we? Coordinators



Juhani Brodtkin,
coordinator, dentists,
chairman-elect



Heikki Tapani Laine,
coordinator, dentists

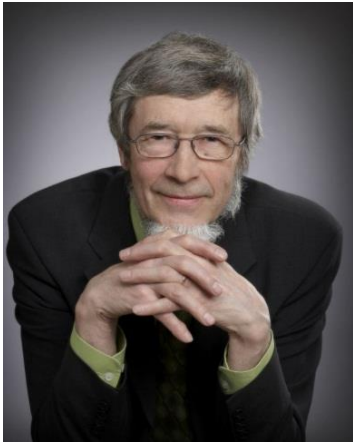


Olli-Pekka Ryyänen,
coordinator,
physicians



Arto Vehviläinen,
coordinator,
physicians

Who are we? Other members



Jouko Tuomisto,
chairman



Ulla Lucenius,
information & PR



Hannu Ervamaa,
treasurer

Important points

- Doctors are recruited several months to a year in advance. Most of them have to agree with their employer on the timing of their vacation.
- This cannot be easily changed, because always somebody else has to replace them. The work has to be done
- This means that if the permits are delayed, it may mean cancellation of the volunteer service and a loss of critical capacity to the receiving hospital

Training and education

- Most Rotary Doctors are highly experienced clinicians of their field
- Permanent impact is only achieved by active collaboration: locals and visitors together
- The hospital does well to recognize this possibility to train their permanent staff
- Education makes the impact of a visit long-term and it can be multiplied locally
- The next 3-year period is planned based with more emphasis on education and training

Future areas of emphasis 2016-18

- Training to work in teams in maternity care
 - Simultaneous education for doctors, nurses, midwives and assisting personnel (emphasizing preventive health care, hygiene, good work practices, safe anesthesia, instrument care and sterilization, rehabilitation)
- Specialist training
 - Supporting ear-throat-nose-specialist training at KCMC, later fields to be agreed
- Dentistry was always training based

Other support?

- **RDBF** is only a **pool of doctors**, nothing else
- It is often asked, if support can be given for other purposes, e.g. instruments, medicines etc.
- RDBF is not able to do this; within Rotary this can be organized as projects between Rotary Clubs: a Tanzanian Rotary club must then be involved as a local organizer

Other support? Equipment to Ilembula



RDBF cannot supply materials, instruments, or medicines.

BUT

Projects between Rotary Clubs are possible

Example: Matching Grant Project of **Mzizima Rotary Club** and several **Helsinki Rotary Clubs** supplied Intensive Care Unit equipment to Ilembula Hospital



Oxymeter shows low oxygen level, and after oxygen supply the condition improved in this pneumonia patient

We will overcome!

- Tanzania is a great and beautiful country
- It is developing very fast compared with much of the world
- The basis of all development is confidence: if people believe in their own capability, they are able for great achievements
- If people have trust on each other, things can be done together, and achievements multiply because of specialization
- Confidence also means we in Finland can trust on your will and ability to do your best to help us in our efforts