Making Progress

During the course of our spring trip, several milestones were accomplished. Building on the success of previous surgical camps, we were able to perform our 100th surgical procedure and reach over 200 patients evaluated in the clinical setting. Each case provides unique learning and training opportunities for the Ugandan surgeons, nurses, and technicians. It is this integration of quality care with education of the healthcare professionals themselves that has allowed us to grow this initiative over the past two years.

We continue to implement new interventions during each surgical camp to improve all aspects of surgical care with the goals of maintaining patient safety and providing the highest quality care. Peri-operative order sets were developed to improve patient safety and identification prior to the start of each case. Intra-operative initiatives included establishing a "time out" protocol, where the surgeons, anesthesia, and nurses perform a safety check prior to the start of the procedure. In addition, measures to improve the sterility of the surgical field have been created. Post-operative care paths that include antibiotic administration, drain care, and discharge/follow-up instructions have been created and utilized.
Finding the cause....

After initial investigations failed to reveal the cause of David’s hoarseness, he was eventually diagnosed with cancer of his voice box in January 2016, and his case was presented by Dr. Jeff Otiti at the newly created multi-disciplinary head and neck tumor board. The recommendation was to perform a total laryngectomy (complete removal of his voice box). Although this procedure is widely available as a curative treatment for cancer in the United States, Uganda is a place of limited healthcare resources. Therefore, David would wait until April, when the surgical team led by Dr. Chad Zender would arrive.

May 2, 2016 was the day of David's long awaited surgery. When asked what he most looked forward to after surgery, he said, “Being home with my family – first I will survive, and focus on surviving, and if I am strong enough, I will enjoy to be back with my family, and I will be happy.”

David was discharged after a one-week recovery. He will continue to follow up with Dr. Otiti, and we are eager to see him again in October when we return.