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Nazarene Hospital Kudjip, Papua New Guinea

Bad Beans by Dr. Erin Meier

Vegetables are a staple in the diet of almost all who live in PNG, including myself. Unfortunately, not all vegetables are good for you. There is a kind of bean that grows around here that looks like a lima bean, but has cyanide in it which makes it very lethal. Most people know which are good beans and which are the bad beans, but the bad beans still get eaten.

Despite a desperate effort to fall back asleep after the 2:00 AM visit to the Pediatric Ward for a child who had stopped breathing, I was wide awake at 3:30 AM when the phone rang. The ER nurse reported a 3 year old child had eaten beans the afternoon before and then started vomiting and having seizures and was now comatose in the ER. I quickly got out of bed and got ready to go and see this child. I knew from the phone call that I was dealing with a cyanide poisoning and was thankful that a donor had recently made it possible for us to purchase the meds we needed to treat cyanide poisoning.

When I got to the ER, I found 7 adults huddled over the bed of this small child, the mom and dad on either side holding the hand of the young boy. Thankfully, the nurse had already started an IV by the time I got there. As I examined the child, I found that he was recovering from a recent seizure, so he wasn't able to talk or follow commands. I gave the family some instructions for helpful things to do to help and then went to get the medicines, which would hopefully reverse the cyanide poisoning. As I was drawing up the IV meds, I had dad place a medicine under his son's nose which he could breathe to help decrease the effect of the cyanide. I talked to the mom and the dad as I was working, explaining the situation and how serious it was and we prayed for God to heal this small child, named Aron. I gave him the IV meds and then we waited and prayed, not knowing when we might see a change.



After being there for about an hour, finishing all my orders, answering all the family's questions and seeing that Aron was stable, I made my way back home. At this point, I knew there was no way I was going to sleep. I did not know how Aron would respond or if he would respond. I was worried for him, as it was 14 hours since ingestion and he ate a whole plate of beans. He was such a little guy, was it too late? I continued to pray for him and his family, going back to check on him a while later after another child came into the ER with pneumonia.

5 hours after I initially saw him, I finished my rounds on the adult ward and went to check on him. He was sleeping, but mom and dad reported that he had woken up and talked to them. Praise God. The next day, I found him talking,

smiling and acting as if nothing had happened the night before. Mom says he was back to normal, so we prayed again, thanking God for his life and I sent them home.

Praise God for this little life and for the medicines that we now have to treat cyanide poisoning. Thanks to all those who respond to our calls for help. You are making a difference in Papua New Guinea.

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YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Support may take the form of medicine, baby packets, medical supplies, equipment, prayer, work & witness trip to PNG. God uses all of us to make a difference in His Kingdom.

Current special supply needs:

Gauze 2x2 and/or 4x4
Gloves
Liquid soap
Skin staplers
Tylenol 500 mg bottles
Hydrogen peroxide

Kerlix rolled gauze
Biohazard bags
Stethoscopes
Casting supplies
Ibuprofen 200 mg bottles
Digital thermometers

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