

June Focus: Jibla Government Hospital

Yemen Smile held a six day cleft lip and palate workshop at Jibla hospital from the 6th of June to the 12th. Over 35 cleft patients were screened at our free clinic, twenty three of whom were operated under the Smile Train and Yemen Smile partnership programmes. In spite of the current political crisis in Yemen, several doctors and dentists from Jibla, Ibb and Sana'a were able to join us for teaching and hands-on training sessions in the operation room.

The surgeons were taught newer approaches to cleft palate muscle retro positioning surgery combined with saline distension, as well as techniques of secondary cleft lip surgery using fascial fillers to improve the appearance of the upper lip. Aesthetic surgical techniques for nose deformities were also demonstrated. The correction of a large hard palate fistula using a buccinator myomucosal flap was successfully performed on one cleft patient.

Some of the senior surgeons who had attended previous training sessions were able to perform soft palate cleft surgeries at this camp. This was particularly encouraging, as enabling local doctors to perform surgeries plays a large role in making our work in Yemen sustainable.

Jibla hospital is the oldest hospital in the country and serves many regions of Yemen with low cost surgeries. Over 9,500 major and minor surgeries are performed there every year.

Despite the efficiency of the staff, however, work there is not without its challenges. Some of the machines are very old and newer medical items—in particular, a bipolar cautery machine, two pulse oximeters, some surgical instruments and two new operating lights with UPS—are urgently needed.

Any contributions towards better equipping Jibla Hospital would allow us to expand the surgical and teaching work we have begun there, and would be greatly appreciated.

