

## Toronto Addis Ababa Academic Collaboration (TAAAC) in Ethiopia

By Michael Blankstein, MD

Fracture treatment in Ethiopia represents a major challenge. Road traffic injuries have produced a growing burden of surgical issues that currently cannot be addressed by the limited number of physicians and resources. As a consequence, children and young adults are facing permanent and potentially preventable disability.

The recently formed Toronto Addis Ababa Academic Collaboration (TAAAC) aims to provide local training opportunities for Ethiopia's most ambitious minds. This university wide initiative was developed in order to enhance the education of residents and now involves fourteen departments ranging from psychiatry and medicine to surgery and laboratory medicine.

The TAAAC orthopaedics and traumatology program has been developed based on a needs assessment study that was carried out through collaboration between the University of Toronto and Addis Ababa University faculty and surgical residents. This new questionnaire was developed to precisely assess the needs of Ethiopian faculty and residents. The partnership envisions developing a skill-based curriculum in collaboration with local orthopaedic faculty and residents.

Goals include:

1. enhancing the AAU residency training for orthopaedics
2. developing a research curriculum in partnership with Ethiopian faculty and residents adequate to local capacity and needs which will focus on health services research related to musculoskeletal care
3. co-assessing the orthopaedic residency

training and research programs based on annual reviews; recognizing the need for mutual learning to understand feasibility and context; plus specific planning for achievable goals

We are currently planning three visits per year involving a staff orthopaedic surgeon, operating room nurse, and two senior residents for four weeks of teaching and collaborative work at the Black Lion Hospital, AAU. University recognition of this scholarly work of residents and faculty is imperative to implement a sustainable program. Long-term plans include obtaining peer-reviewed grants and producing tangible academic outputs such as publishable research articles.

More information is available at <http://www.taaac.com/>



Dr. David Cadotte (Left) and Dr. Michael Blankstein at the annual Ethiopian surgical society meeting



Cast technicians and physiotherapists applying the Ponseti technique at the clubfoot clinic.