

Medusa Travel and Conference Funding Scheme

Mark Cox
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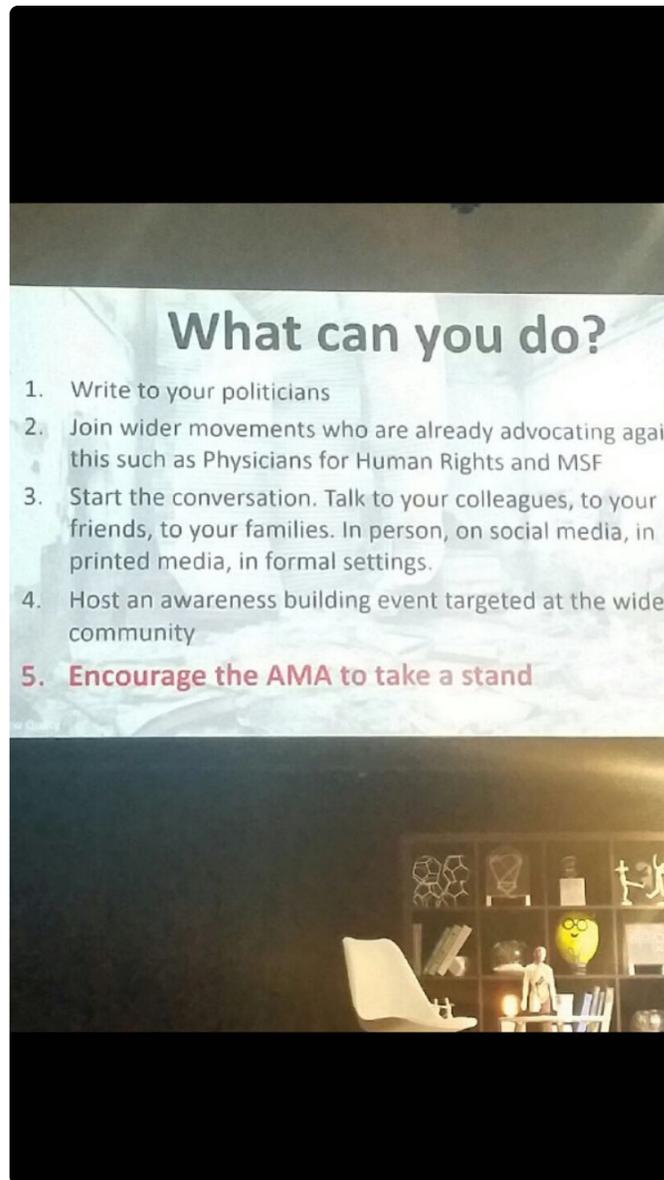
The 2016 AMSA Global Health Conference in Newcastle attracted over 700 Medical Students across Australia, New Zealand and Fiji. Although I was only able to attend 2 full academic days (due to a Brain and Behaviour midsem exam!), I can confidently say that the experience was one of the best I have had in Medicine and one that I feel privileged to be apart of.

Without a doubt, a key highlight, and a speech I can only describe as 'life altering' was by Kathleen Thomas, an MSF doctor who was volunteering in the Kunduz Trauma Centre whilst it was bombed by US forces in 2015. Her eye-witness account of the events evoked tears amongst all audience members and she received a standing ovation. I must admit, prior to this, I was rather oblivious to the fact that there have been 440 hospital attacks in the last 4 years and how even Australia's own allies are involved.

Another amazing presentation was from Khadija Gbla, a survivor and activist against Female Genital Mutilation. This was an issue that I knew next to nothing about and did not realise its significance in Australia. There are approximately 18000 women currently in Australia who have undergone female genital mutilation as children and many have ongoing effects such as infertility, incontinence, reoccurring infections and pain. Khadija passionately spoke about how young girls who undergo this procedure are affected for life and how many doctors lack education regarding the issue.

Finally, I learnt from Dr Kevin Baker, an experienced MSF doctor, who ran a workshop on providing critical care in disaster zones. Whilst much of the equipment we would find in an Australian hospital might not be available, he demonstrated how to make do with what you have, for example, using a point of care ultrasound to detect a tension pneumothorax in a matter of seconds without a chest x-ray.

I would highly recommend the 2017 AMSA Global Health conference in Adelaide next year to all medical students. It provides perspective and builds a passion that I believe you can't always get at university.



Key messages from Dr Kathleen Thomas's presentation on hospital bombings



Panel discussion on Refugee and Asylum Seekers