



New laser provides a ray of hope for scar reduction in burn survivors

The Phoenix Burns Project, supported by the ABC Charity Challenge Hike and Bike fund raiser events in 2016 and 2017, has donated a brand new Lumenis M22 laser to the Red Cross War Memorial Children's hospital. This laser will complement the existing Ultrapulse CO₂ laser to offer the full range of laser scar treatment capabilities in this unit, making it the only burns unit in Africa to offer this life-changing therapy.

The word laser is an acronym derived from the phrase **L**ight **A**mplification by **S**timulated **E**mission of **R**adiation. This means light energy of a single frequency is concentrated in a beam. The intense light beam of the Ultrapulse laser, used typically a year after the burn, vaporizes parts of the burn scar, creating tiny wells in the scar in which new healing occurs. This reduces the hardness, thickness, redness and itchiness of the burn scars. Various wavelengths interact in different ways with the skin.

The Ultrapulse laser targets water in the tissue whereas the new M22 laser targets haemoglobin in the blood. Early scars are highly vascular, which means they are rich in tiny blood vessels. The M22 laser energy is preferentially deposited in these early vascular scars, thus destroying the blood vessels in the scar without causing damage to the surrounding tissue.



The benefit of the M22 laser is that it can be used much earlier than the Ultrapulse laser, thus modulating the scar from as early as 4-6 weeks after the burn whilst reducing the problematic burn scar itching that causes intense frustration, sleep deprivation and requires multiple medications to control. Apart from burn treatment, this laser offers new hope to children with vascular malformations and disfiguring port wine stains, various eye conditions and dermatological conditions.



The treatments are relatively painless and are done in adults without sedation. For children, deep sedation or general anaesthesia is still preferred.

The benefits of the laser treatment manifest quickly, with improved elasticity experienced immediately, and the improvement continues for months to follow as the new collagens and elastin are formed.

This laser is going to provide life-changing treatment to thousands of children. Children already treated with the Ultrapulse laser are showing the promise of such laser treatments. For the first time, children are asking to come back to the unit for more treatment! We would like to thank all the Phoenix partners and each and every ABC Challenge Hiker and Biker for this wonderful early Christmas gift of light!

Phoenix hosts conference on rehabilitation and burn prevention in Cape Town

In January 2017 Phoenix and the Professions Allied to Medicine Committee of the European Burn Association co-organised a three-day workshop at the Red Cross Children's Hospital focusing on rehabilitation and burn prevention. European and South African burn care professionals from a variety of disciplines exchanged their knowledge and experience in all aspects of burn care.

The workshop programme comprised a mix of formal presentations as well as a variety of practical skills stations with hands-on learning opportunities and ample informal discussion time. New professional ties were forged by the participants, who have kept in touch with one another.



Phoenix & European Burn Association support the attendance of Red Cross staff at the 2017 European Burn Congress in Barcelona

Building on the successful Rehabilitation and Prevention Workshop held in Cape Town in January 2018, Phoenix and the European Burn Association (EBA) supported the attendance of two burn care professionals from the Red Cross Children's Hospital Burn Unit at the 2017 European Burn Association's Congress in Barcelona.

Head Burns unit nurse, Revona Goosen, and Head of Occupational Therapy, Mereille Pursad, were invited to attend and address Congress. This was a unique opportunity for these two long-serving staff members to experience an international burn congress since travel funding to such events is normally only available for burn surgeons.

Goosen presented a paper on nursing challenges in treating burns in developing countries. Pursad spoke on innovative occupational therapy techniques developed in South Africa to treat patients from a very broad spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds. The two delegates benefitted from attending the very rich programme of presentations and from numerous informal discussions with their international colleagues.

We have no doubt that patients served by these staff members will benefit from the knowledge they gained at the EBA congress.



Sr Revona Goosen and Ms Mereille Pursad.



The EBA PAM Committee with their Red Cross guests.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

Phoenix spreads its wings in burn prevention

Phoenix has significantly expanded its burn prevention activities during 2017. The emphasis is on training school children, teachers and parents on various aspects of burn prevention.

The reinvigorated burn prevention drive is being spearheaded by Phoenix's Vice President, Sean Defty, who is supported by the NGO "Passion to Serve" and by burn survivors William Baartman and Sibongile Zenzile.

Informal dwellings demonstrating safe and unsafe practices have been erected in some informal settlements and Sean donated a tiny "shack town" to the Red Cross Burns Unit to assist with empowering children in the unit with burn safety knowledge. Ten formal school training sessions were

presented this year. Fire safe candle holders, information leaflets, T-shirts with prevention messages and Burn Safety Officer badges formed part of this fun-filled safety learning experience.



Flying Phoenixes

Comair (British Airways and Kulula) kindly sponsors flights for children and families to and from Red Cross Children's Hospital. This makes a huge difference for skin-grafted burn patients that have to travel long distances to reach the Hospital. Phoenix has partnered with this wonderful programme to provide hospital-to-airport transport, assisting with check-in procedures, providing clothing for the journey, funding luggage needs and plastic wrapping of luggage and providing taxi or bus fares and meals from the destination airport to the patients' homes. Eleven children were assisted during 2016-2017. For one little boy, flying was a life-changing experience. Ever since his flight he has been dreaming of becoming a pilot.



Phoenix helps to turn tragedy into triumph

A 9-year-old cerebral palsied boy from the Eastern Cape defeated all the odds and survived major flame burns, which he sustained when he fell off a bed onto a paraffin heater. Prior to the burn injury he had long outgrown his wheelchair at home and his devoted mother had to carry him in her arms around the home and around their small village. Phoenix funded a state-of-the-art custom-made wheelchair for him and supported them financially for the journey home. This brave boy will now be able to go places again!



Thank YOU, donors!

We gratefully thank all our many individual donors and the following organisations and groups for their on-going support: Action for Burns and Children, Anne Pickering and M&M Fundraiser donors, Catholic Women's League, Catholic Bishops' Lenten Appeal, St Margaret Mary Parish, Cripps Sears & Partners, Phoenix Flyers, Woodside, Total Oil, Schlumberger, Wood Mackenzie and the European Burn Association.

