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## Helping train the surgeons of the world

Providing world-class health care goes beyond our borders. It includes training clinicians around the globe to provide the very best health care to as many people as possible.

Nikita Mehta, 35, was the first cardiothoracic surgeon to train in Kenya and the first female cardiothoracic surgeon in East and Central Africa.

Next year, thanks to the Baird Institute, she will start a two year placement at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital to help her achieve her dream of setting up a self-sustained cardiothoracic centre of clinical care, training and research in Kenya.



“We have 12 cardiothoracic surgeons in Kenya serving a population of 49 million people and the established centres doing major work are only in Nairobi,” she says.

“The bulk of our work is with young adults with rheumatic heart disease and children with congenital heart diseases. Less than 0.4 per cent of surgeries are for coronary artery disease or degenerative valvular disease which is contrary to what you see in Australia.

“In Kenya, we are still in the infantile stage when it comes to cardiac surgery. This is partly because of the lack of skilled personnel, as well as the numerous challenges of providing super specialised care in a resource constrained environment. Working at RPA will give me exposure to cardiac surgeries which are not routinely performed back home.”

Dr Mehta completed her undergraduate and post-graduate training at the University of Nairobi last year, graduating with a Master’s degree in cardiothoracic and vascular surgery

Her placement at RPA will be under the guidance of Professor Paul Bannon, who has been involved in developing the University of Nairobi’s cardiovascular and thoracic surgical training program for several years.

Dr Mehta, and colleague Fredrick Mitema, toured RPA, the Institute of Academic Surgery and the Charles Perkins Centre last week with the Kenyan High Commissioner Amb. Isaiya Kabira.