

Dr Ruth Hulser in Tabora, Tanzania reports on how a new community medical outreach project, Familia Moja, had a big impact on a young life



Luka had severe malaria and pneumonia

# Luka's miracle

I STARED aghast at the X-ray, unable to believe that Luka was still alive. His head and neck appeared totally disconnected!

Luka, 14, has epilepsy. Back in August he was climbing a tree when he had a seizure, fell and lost consciousness.

When he came to, his neck was completely bent forward and he couldn't lift his head due to immense pain. Luka's parents walked him 10km to the regional hospital, but he was sent home without an examination.

After two-and-a-half months of no improvement, Luka's father became impatient and decided to "straighten" Luka's neck by yanking his head up – and the boy became totally paralysed.

His parents had no choice but to return to the hospital, where Luka was X-rayed. However, the staff didn't tell Luka's parents what I later saw so obviously on the X-ray – the boy's neck was broken. Instead, they sent the



**I watched with tears as Luka rose from his bed and walked outside**

family home with epilepsy tablets. When we visited Luka, he'd been reduced to spending day and night lying motionless on a plastic sheet on

the earth floor, unable even to wave the flies off his face. He had severe malaria and pneumonia.

We decided to do everything possible to stabilise Luka, though the situation seemed bleak. We fitted him with a collar, gave him malaria and pneumonia injections and taught his mother how to clean him.

I asked my home church to pray for Luka and sought advice from neurosurgeons in Oxford. They told me I shouldn't hold out hope, but that he should get a 'halo' device connected to a 'vest' that would keep his head from moving.

A week later, as his pneumonia eased, Luka started moving his hands. Over the next few weeks, he began to regain feeling and control in the rest of his body.

Then one day, three months later, I watched with tears as Luka rose from his bed and walked outside. God had pulled him back from death and paralysis.

If God did this for Luka, can we not be sure of his redeeming mercies, his power and his love?

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