

# Flying for life in Timor-Leste: characteristics of aeromedical retrievals and model of care.

## Abstract

The world's largest humanitarian not-for-profit airline, Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF), is the sole aeromedical retrieval provider in Timor-Leste, where it has been providing emergency services for patients and their families from remote and isolated regions since 2006. Till now, there has been no research describing the characteristics and clinical outcomes for aeromedical retrieval (AR) patients from remote locations in Timor-Leste, nor any analysis of AR system strengths and weaknesses and how it could be strengthened. This study aims to describe patient characteristics, referral reasons and survival outcomes for AR patients in Timor-Leste between 2023-2024. It will then investigate how AR practices can be improved to enhance quality of care for patients and their families. A mixed methods approach will be used. In Phase 1 retrospective individual-level administrative data will be analysed using quantitative descriptive statistics: demographic characteristics of AR patients by District; reasons for referral using an adapted International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) framework; and survival outcomes. Phase 2 will describe the AR model used in Timor-Leste, and semi-structured interviews will be conducted to better understand which AR structures and processes currently work, which don't work well, and what could be done to improve the AR process and outcomes. This study will inform best practice guidelines in a developing country and raise awareness of the issues impacting service delivery in a low resource context.