

B. The Support and Assistance given by such members of the Surgical Team.

Again, I would expect the nurses and perfusionists to give an account of their own contribution to the work of the team, but I would like to indicate briefly how I viewed their contribution, from my perspective.

NURSES.

Nursing staff as members of the team played an important role in two areas. First there were those who assisted the anaesthetists, both in the anaesthetic room and in the operating theatre during the actual surgical procedure. These nurses had acquired specialised training and experience. The second role of nurses in the operating theatre is to assist the operating surgeons. Some do that by being scrubbed and others by being unscrubbed, but by moving about the theatre ("running") in order to provide whatever item of equipment is needed at any given time.

PERFUSIONISTS.

Perfusionists have as their chief role the operation of cardio pulmonary bypass (the heart lung machine). This is the equipment without which open heart surgery cannot be performed. It maintains life for the time necessary to do whatever surgical procedure is being done within the heart. This time may be short, less than half an hour, or it may last for a number of hours. Be it long or short, the life of the patient depends absolutely on the proper functioning of this machine for the whole of that time. The equipment must be maintained and operated with an extraordinary degree of reliability. It maintains life by doing the work of the lungs, that is to say, adding oxygen to the blood and also by doing the work of the heart, that is to say, by

pumping the blood around the body. The delivery of oxygenated blood to all the organs of the body is essential to maintain life. Thus it will be seen that the role of the perfusionist is of vital importance.