

Puerto Plata ,Dominican Republic Mission 2012
September 13 - 22, 2012
Dental Team Report

This mission was located in the northern coast of Dominican Republic in the town of Puerto Plata. On this mission the dental team consisted of only one dentist, Dr.Oswald Cameron and one dental assistant, Barbara Cameron. In addition the dental team was accompanied by the medical team which consisted of three pediatricians, a pediatric nurse, a plastic surgeon with his two assistants.

Three locations were chosen to provide comprehensive dental care to the indigent population of each area.

Barrio El Javillar

This community of 1,500 habitants is located two miles west of downtown Puerto Plata. Was created as a consequence of a migration from country side to city in search of work linked to the turism industry. It grew without any planification or services resulting in many social problems for which the government has not addressed.

The site used to provide our services was a school building located in the heart of the community. Potable water and electricity was available during most of the day. During the times electricity was not available a local portable generator provided needed electrical power.

The portable dental delivery system was mounted connected to scuba diving tanks as a source of compressed air for its proper functioning. This is the first time this type of compressed air source was used in our missions. The first day two tanks proved not to be enough air to satisfy the need. On the second day three tanks was suffcient with careful and minimal utilization.

The type of dental care offered was extractions, dental cleaning and restorations. However due to limitations of the available compressed air and the need of the mayority of those who attended , extractions was the most provided service. It was evident that this population did not have regular access to preventive , restorative or surgical dental care mostly due to their poor financial condition. At this site during the approximately 14 hours of service we provided 45 patients were attended and treated.

Munoz Clinic

Our second site located three miles east of downtown Puerto Plata is a walk-in clinic, maintained by a local non-profit organization CEPROSH of Puerto Plata offering free consultations, including on site dental and medical exams and treatment. Most of the patients attended where from the nearby Munoz Batey, a mostly Haitian/Dominican population.

At this site the dental care was limited to extractions only due to lack of compressed air because of damaged local air compressor which was supposed to be in working

conditions as previously stated. However, as in the previous site extractions seem to be the most prevalent and requested service. In 17 hours of service 41 patients were attended and treated.

Monkey Jungle Clinic

Our third location approximately 25 miles from downtown Puerto Plata up in the hills of the Sosua region is home to squirrel and capuchin monkeys in a 2 acre tropical jungle with a Tree Zip Line business where visitors pay admission to feed, interact with the monkeys or enjoy a zip line ride. All proceeds from Monkey Jungle go to support the on site medical and dental clinic for the poor. US physicians and medical professionals volunteer to staff the medical center and a Haitian or Dominican doctor sees patients when no volunteer is present. Patients attended where bussed in from different locations from the Puerto Plata/Sosua region.

The facilities here were very comfortable self sufficient where general dental care was provided to include dental cleaning, extractions and restorations.

During the 19 hours of care provided 52 patients were treated. The dental director, Dr. Gerry Pinsonneault assisted our team treating several patients.

	JAVILLAR	MUNOZ CLINIC	MONKEY JUNGLE CLINIC	AGE	MALE	FEMALE	EXTRACT	RESTORATIONS	DENTAL CLEANING	OTHER
	13	5	14	2 TO 10	17	16	32	1	6	0
	9	3	7	11 TO 15	12	7	13	6	1	3
	2	2	5	16 TO 20	6	3	9	3	0	3
	5	4	3	21 TO 25	6	6	11	4	3	1
	1	10	8	26 TO 30	13	6	17	4	0	0
	5	9	6	31 TO 40	9	12	18	0	5	5
	5	6	5	41 TO 50	7	9	11	3	5	1
	4	2	2	51 TO 60	4	4	4	1	3	1
	1	0	0	61 >	0	1	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	45	41	52		74	64	116	22	23	14

TOTAL PATIENTS = 138
TOTAL PROCEDURES = 175

Summary:

The Dominican Republic consists of the eastern two thirds of the island of Hispaniola, with a population of 9 million people. One quarter of the population lives below the poverty level.

The monthly household income is between \$35 and \$80. The area of Puerto Plata has a public hospital, which is old and poorly equipped. Many other private health care facilities exist which cost for services is out of the reach for most of the families. It is common that running water and electricity is only available a few hours each day. The “bateys” where many haitian/dominicans live are even poorer. They are areas “forgotten” or with very little attention by the government. The lack of potable or uncontaminated water is prevalent. Even though there are some small clinics available for free or very small cost many do not utilize them due to lack of education, lack of financial resources or traveling restrictions, lack of proper documentation and in many instances discrimination and those that utilize them continue to live under conditions that repeatedly exposes them to conditions that lead to the disease or poor health in the first place.

The need for dental care in these areas are enormous! Dental disease exacts a toll on children, affecting their development, school performance, and behavior. In extreme cases, dental disease can lead to more serious health complications, including disability and even death. The consequences of no dental care are mounting and they are preventable. It was common to see the need of several extractions in the same person. The need for dental care is greatest in the children. Disease and other health risks are avoidable if children are taught prevention and given the tools to take care of themselves including “in time” access to dental preventive and restorative care.

The Healing Hands Foundation can greatly contribute to improving the oral and general health in this population with continuous support by carrying on future missions with these objectives.

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