

## Dental Team Report Sierra Leone 2011 Mission

### INTRODUCTION

The Healing Hands Foundation (THHF) is a non profit organization providing health care to those in need all around the world. On this second mission to Sierra Leone (SL), the dental team has been able to reach and treat hundreds of children and adults many with urgent, chronic and life threatening dental conditions. As part of our commitment for the next three years we will continue to assist improving the overall health condition of the people of SL.



The dental mission took place from June 20 thru June 27, 2011 at two locations. The first 5 days treatment was provided at the Connaught Hospital Oral Health Department in Freetown and one day at the Abigail Butcher Elementary School in Calaba Town.



Our team consisted of Dr. Oswald Cameron, Claire Witting (Special Assistant), Dr. Fedra Witting, Dr. Carol Caballero, Barbara Cameron (Special Assistant) and Charles Montanez (Special Assistant/Photographer).

The mission and efforts at Connaught Hospital was accomplished in partnership with the local Dental Director, Dr. Patrick Davies and his team of Dental Therapist assisted by his wonderful professional and skillfull staff.

## OBJECTIVE

Our first objective for this mission was to provide general dental care to include restorations, dental cleanings and extractions provided that the proper equipment for the delivery of these services was available including our own portable delivery equipment usability.

Once triage of patients commenced it was obvious that the greater need and the area where we will be more effective was providing extractions of infected teeth shifting our primary goal and objective to relieve pain thru extractions . During the course of achieving this main objective we will informally asses the need for preventive and restorative dental care for future application.

As a result of previous publicity of our presence by the Hospital Director the large amount of attendees/patients was enormous, testimony of the great need for dental care among the people of SL. However, with the assistant of Dr. Davies and his team we jointly were able to treat the mayority of people seeking our care.



## Patient Attendance and Treatment Performed

CH (Cannought Hospital)

AB(Abigail Butcher School)

Team	# Patients		# Extractions		# Triage/Exam		#Procedures	
	CH	AB	CH	AB	CH	AB	CH	AB
THHF	215	220	275	12	110	220	385	232
Team Dr.Davies	349	NA	452	NA	0	NA	452	NA
<b>TOTAL</b>	784		739		330		1069	

In Cannought Hospital 70 % of the patients were between ages 21 to 62 and 30% between ages 5-20.



In Abigail Butcher School 40% of the patients were between ages 4 to 6; 40% between ages 7 to 9 ; 18% between ages 10 to 16 and 2% between ages 1 to 3.

At both locations the average Female / Male ration was approximately 55/45 %.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

1. Many people were relieved of pain and possible complications
2. Distribution of toothbrushes/paste
3. General overview of future dental care needs
3. Both teams benefited from sharing knowledge and skills

## **CHALLENGES**

1. High patient turnover
2. Short duration of mission compared to dental needs.
3. Required Dental equipment for prevention and restorative dental care and timely sterilization procedures.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

In view of the above success stories and shortcomings, I suggest the following:

1. Continuity and sustainability of dental services through future missions and monitoring and evaluation of the impact created.
2. Assist local dental professionals in their dental materials/ instrumentation/ equipment needs.
3. Extension of mission duration if resources permit.
4. Use wisely any funds donated for assisting local population in the cost for receiving dental care.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to acknowledge THHF and the Madiou Williams Foundation (MWF) for organizing the mission.

I appreciate the determination of the members of our dental team to relieve dental suffering. I am also grateful to the team for sacrificing time, funds and pleasure to help the people of SL.

A special thanks to Dr. Patrick Davies, his team's Dental Therapists and staff who unconditionally gave us the opportunity to use their facilities and worked diligently arduous hours treating patients that were part of the mission program and in several instances provided needed materials and sharing techniques.

All the participating members of THHF, MWF and local friends and volunteers that gave us their support and assistance.

And last but not least a warm salute and thanks to the people of Sierra Leone for their hospitality, kindness and appreciation of our efforts.



***Report by Dr. Oswald Cameron , Dental Director for The Healing Hands Foundation for the Sierra Leone 2011 Mission held in June 2011.***