



The Healing Hands Foundation

November

2016

The Healing Hands Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to providing medical, dental, and surgical care to people in need around the world.

**Patzun,
Guatemala**

Contents

Healing Our World... One Child at a Time 2

 Summary 2

 History 2

 2016 Mission 2

 Dental Procedures..... 4

 Future Mission Trip Needs 5

 Conclusion..... 5

 References 6



Healing Our World... One Child at a Time

Summary

A group of 38 medical professionals arrived in the small town of Patzun, Guatemala on November 4, 2016. Patzun is located in Central America at an elevation of 7500 feet with a population of approximately 19,000 people. Due to the large population of indigenous and rural communities, access to medical care is nearly impossible for many who live here. The Healing Hands Foundation (THHF) is committed to providing medical, dental, and surgical care to those in need around the world. Bridging the gap to allow the poor and vulnerable life changing treatments is at the foundations core.

The mission takes place at the Corpus Christi Hospital, located within the community. This hospital is more than just a place to receive medical care it doubles as an orphanage and is “home” to many children. The people of the community and surrounding areas have access to the hospital for care. There are four rooms inside the hospital that are used to perform surgeries. Other areas of the hospital allow for dental procedures, pre and post operation examinations and recovery areas.

History

The Healing Hands Foundation was founded in 2007 and is a non-profit organization serving around the world providing medical services to those in need. Guatemala, Ecuador, Colombia, Sierra Leone, Dominican Republic, Panama, Guyana, Philippines are some of the countries THHF has served. Seeking to reach areas with little or no access to resources is critical. THHF has been traveling to Corpus Christi Hospital since 2009, including this year’s trip and a triage trip in September 2016, a total of nine successful mission trips have been made. Each journey to Patzun brings a variety of surgeries, medical treatments, and dental procedures. All trips are made possible by volunteers, donors, and in-country volunteers, with the number of surgical procedures growing each year. Local physicians determine the initial need for care and refer potential candidates for surgery. Volunteers from THHF identify if medical treatment is necessary and when surgery can be performed. Families often travel great distances to meet with volunteers from THHF team. Some patients arrive by car, motorcycle or bus, but many walk. The need for care is great and families are willing to make the long commute, many traveling up to 12 hours to receive treatment.

2016 Mission

In early September, a triage trip in Patzun was conducted. During the trip THHF volunteers assessed patients and determined what method of care was needed. 73 patients were seen during this triage trip. This initial assessment allows for better organization and preparedness for the mission. Each case is assigned a day, tentative surgical time and operating room.

Our gifted crew consisted of four surgeons (two plastics, a pediatric and an OB/GYN), four dentists, a pediatrician, an OB/GYN resident, an anesthesiologist, multiple nurse anesthetists, dental hygienists, a handful of nurses, surgical techs, med school and nursing students and a few translators, all totaling 38 volunteers! Volunteers travel from all over the United States to be a part of the mission and work with minimal medical supplies. Members of THHF team start coordinating many months in advance to gather

medical supplies that will be needed during the trip. The team must bring supplies needed for pre-op, the procedure itself and post-op.

95 surgeries (on 83 patients) were conducted over a five day period. Surgical cases by subspecialty totaled 28 for general, 10 for GYN and 57 for plastics. Many of the cases consisted of multiple operations, the number of surgeries performed on males totaled 45 and females totaled 38.

Figure 1 breaks down each surgical procedure and total number of patients treated.

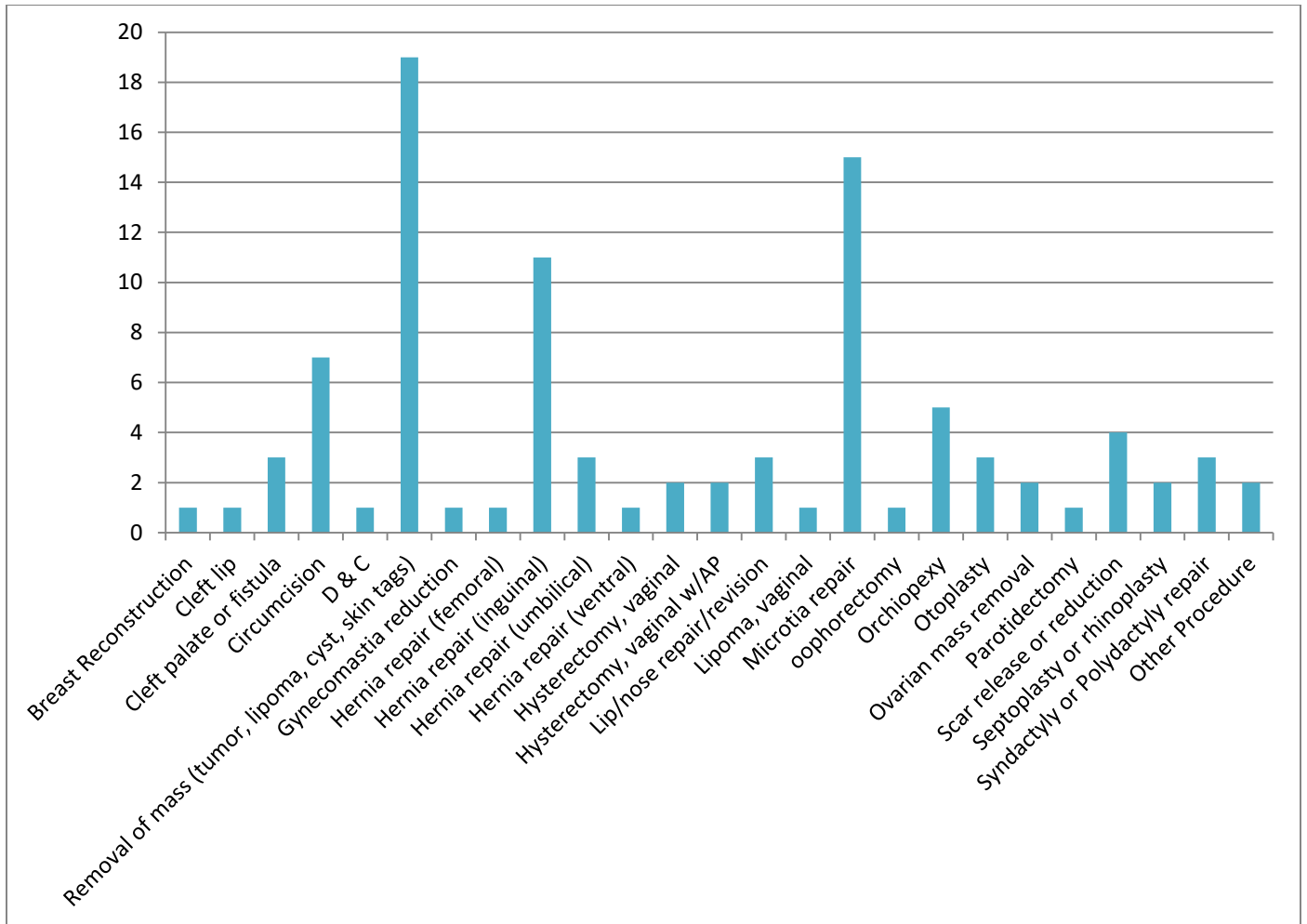


Figure 1

The most common surgical procedure performed was the ‘Removal of mass’ which included tumors, lipomas, cysts and skin tags totaling 19. The second highest was ‘Microtia Repair’ with 15 in total and 11 ‘Hernia repair (inguinal)’ were completed. In years past these three surgical procedures are among the highest. Many of the procedures are completed in stages, meaning patients travel to Corpus Christi Hospital multiple years in a row in order to complete their surgical plan. Patients were asked if they had received surgery in the past from THHF and if so, how many prior surgeries. During the 2016 mission the number of patients receiving their first surgery with THHF were 58, patients receiving their second

surgery were 9 and patients receiving their third surgery totaled 7. These numbers are beneficial for future trips to help verify past surgical history and eventually track data for patients who do not come back for surgery.

Understanding how communication is relayed throughout the world ensures that the greatest number of people hear about future mission trips. All patients were asked during their pre-op assessment how they were referred. Many patients heard through doctors in the region, others heard through various outlets such as colleges, family, friends, hospital announcements, jobs, newspaper, nuns, past patients, radio and word of mouth.

Data was captured to represent the total number of patients seen and treated by THHF during the 2016 Patzun trips (see Figure 2). Numbers include patients seen for the Triage Trip, Dental, Medical, Surgical, PT/PT and Total patient count.

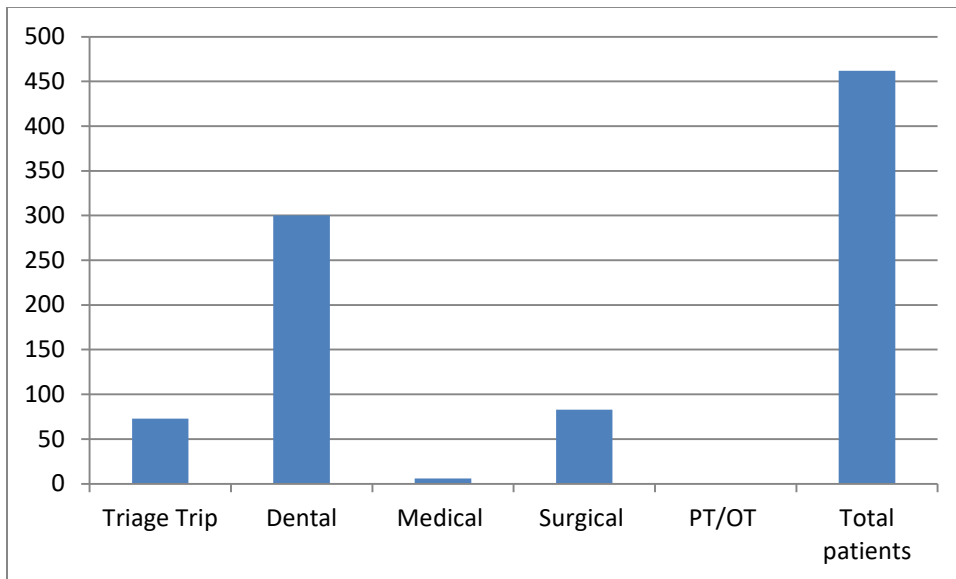


Figure 2

Dental Procedures

The dental team presence in Guatemala plays a major role in educating families on the benefits of good oral hygiene. 647 dental procedures were completed in four days! The prevention of dental problems such as plaque and tarter build up are essential. Access to dentistry is scarce in many areas in Guatemala. Patients traveled long hours to be seen by the dental hygienists and dentists. Procedures such as restorations, extractions and dental cleanings are areas of great need in Patzun and surrounding areas.

Figure 3 represents the various dental procedures that were completed. The highest number of patients was seen for 'Oral Examinations' and 'Restorations (Fillings)' had the second highest. In years past 'Restorations' accounted for majority of the dental procedures.

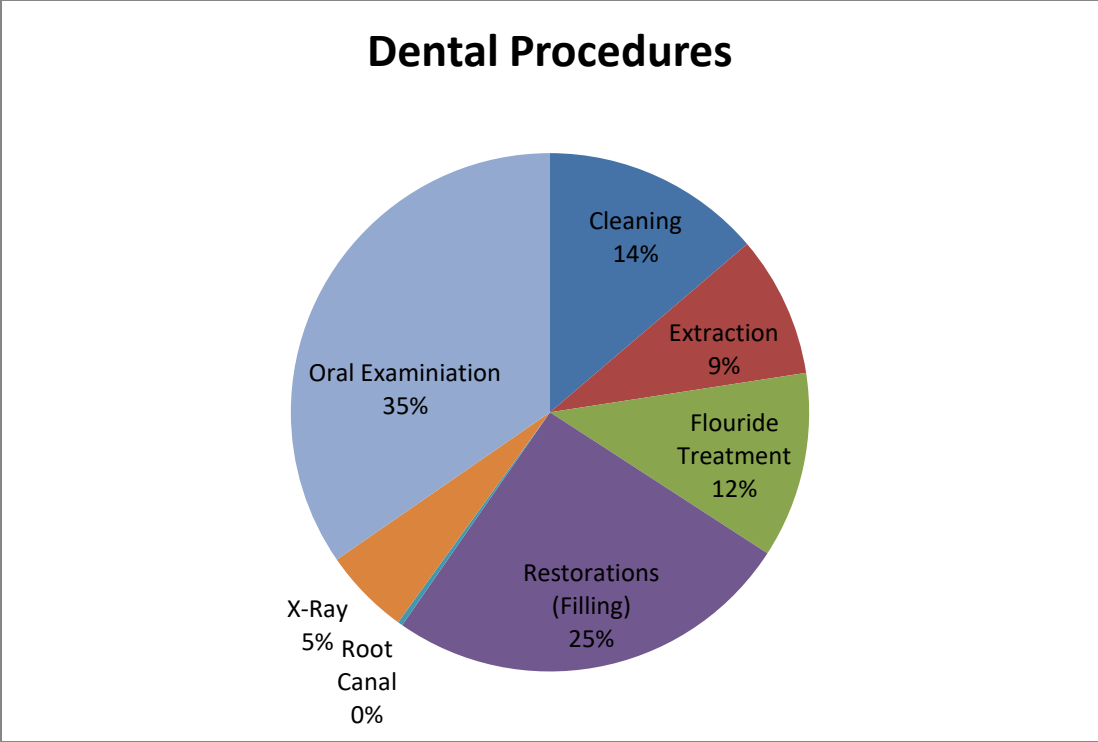


Figure 3

Future Mission Trip Needs

THHF has opportunities to expand to increase the number of individuals they serve. Growing as a foundation consists of more than just increasing the volume of volunteers. Medical equipment, treatment supplies, space, money and resources are some of the many items of the list. Providing the highest quality of care to patients is essential. All records are kept using paper files. Having access to past medical treatments and family history allows more accurate care. Financial support helps to fund future trips. Getting supplies needed for surgery, pre and post op care and dental procedures keeps future missions possible. The volunteers put in countless hours during each mission trip. Better dental equipment is something that would greatly benefit THHF. The compassion and love shared with patients and their family members comes from the godness of the hearts of those who serve.

Conclusion

A record number of surgeries were performed during the 2016 Guatemala trip. The surgeons were remarking on the efficiency and teamwork of the volunteers allowing us to have the most successful mission yet. Long hours were spent at the hospital preparing rooms for surgery, sterilizing instruments, performing operations, tending to patients and documenting in charts. All of the hard work comes full circle when you see the look on a patients face after surgery. Completing 95 surgeries and 647 dental procedures in a 5 day period is simply amazing and there’s no doubt the number will keep increasing in years to come.

References

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- Mission Talley Sheet