

HEALTH TALENTS INTERNATIONAL

Surgery Clinic Trip Report

June 6-13, 2015

Team Members: Surgeons: Drs. Scott Ballinger, Grady Bruce, Ben Doke, Charles Gross, Stacy Lenger, John Little and Kim Scott; Internal Medicine/Pediatrician: Dr. John Scott; Anesthesiologist Drs. Helen Bean-Chang and Christy Nelson; CRNA's: Melinda Gibson and Buddy Malone; Nurse Practitioners: Marisa Ferrari and Terryn Nelson; Physical Therapist: Christie Breedlove; Nurses: Amy Archer, Jeanie Damren, Twyla Doty, Sarah Hayden, Angie Hermesmeyer, Tianna Mashburn, Rhonda McClelland, Janet McNeil, Brenda Robinson, Ashton Ross, Chelsea Smith, Deborah Walterscheid and Keir Willoughby; Surgical Tech: Lacey Noel; Nursing Students: Laura Bellinger and Vickie Schoenherr; OR Circulators: Sarah Coleman, Julie Ann Harper, Bryn Hester, John Grant Little, Matt Little and Emily Woody; Medical Student: Danielle Kelvas; Sterilization: Susan Harper and Tonya Martin; Caregivers: Julie Ballinger, Anna Leigh Breedlove, Elayna Bruce, Jessica Bruce, Jennifer Little, Sarah Little, Kay Reiboldt, Claire Scott, Cami Simmons, Haley Smith, Ashton Thompson and Morgan Walterscheid; Translators: Cynthia Allen, Benjamin Brazzel, Nelson Galarraga, Manuel Guarcas, Edison Quvedo, Mario Rosas and Loren Visaez; Trip Chaplain: Rubel Shelly; Trip Leaders: Rick Harper.

More and more of our team members are choosing to fly into Guatemala City on Friday night instead of the early morning Saturday routine. For those with flexibility and who are willing to spend an extra \$45-50, this is a great option. For most of us, Saturday morning came early as we were at our various regional airports by 4:30 AM to catch connecting flights to Atlanta or Houston. And for one wonderful addition, Dr. Helen Bean Chang, it meant flying the redeye on Saturday night through LA and landing in Guatemala around 9:00 AM Sunday morning. (We did not have optimal coverage in anesthesia this week, Dr. Helen heard of our plight and very graciously joined us late into our planning and proved to be of tremendous service.)

Our flight out of Houston was delayed and meant we got a late start from the airport. We arrived just as darkness settled upon us, safe and secure. Since we arrived so late, we ate supper first, had an abbreviated facility orientation before setting off to unpack supplies and complete an inventory while our surgeons and translators began seeing patients.

Sunday, June 7: Since we had an abbreviated orientation Saturday evening, we met together following breakfast for introductions. Old friends caught up on events from the past year and new friendships were forged. Shortly before 10 AM, we walked across to worship with the Montellano church family where Josue led singing, Carlos delivered the lesson and Dr. Nehemias shared communion thoughts. We were all deeply touched by one brother who entered for worship shortly before we began. He walked to his chair, turned towards the back, settled on his knees in the seat while facing the rear of the church building and offered a precious, penitent prayer. And before he would share in communion, he went forward to seek forgiveness and confess his sins!

Following worship, we assembled in the dining room for our med/surg orientation, lunch and the commencement of surgery. Eight hours later, we had completed five general, three ENT and four GYN cases. This would be our latest evening in the OR and ensuing days got a little bit shorter each day. (I should give a shout out to Angie Hermesmeyer and Brenda Robinson who covered the immediate post-op area during these long days. And thank you to all that spelled them and pitched in during your off hours.)

Monday, June 8: Six MET students joined us Monday to observe in the OR, thus we sent Dr. John Scott and Christie Breedlove out with several caregivers on our team to participate in the mobile clinics. This was the first time ENT surgery was scheduled in June and they had five cases on the board, while general and GYN each six for a very strong day. Some of the ENT and GYN cases throughout the week would take 3-4 hours and more than one weary set of feet visited the sterilization room for “emergency chocolate” or other treats.

RN’s Brenda and Angie with the perpetually glowing, Kay Reiboldt.



Tuesday June 9: The routine was now set and both General and GYN had six slated for surgery with ENT only four...but one was a very difficult thyroidectomy. Two OR rooms were finished at a reasonable hour, one a bit late. However, one of our patients developed complications and needed three units of blood over the next twelve hours. We took her back into the OR around 10 PM and found no arterial bleeding and simply applied pressure for half an hour. She was simply bleeding from the trauma of surgery and the swelling from the bleeding was actually aiding in the recovery as it staunched the bleeding. The body is pretty amazing!

Not only did the late OR nights and complications create fatigue with our immediate post-op nurses and OR crew, but added to the challenge our midnight crew encountered. Marisa Ferrari, DNP and faculty member at Rochester College rallied her troops and did a masterful job. Marisa was joined by two of her nursing students, Laura and Vickie and caregiver Ashton each night along with a steady rotation of other RN's and caregivers.

Rubel Shelly, a doctor in his own right, was our trip chaplain this week and his more than forty years of teaching, preaching and writing were on display for all throughout the week. Whether he was seeking out key places and patients over whom to pray, observing surgery or focusing our devotional thoughts on the fruit of the Spirit, he was a blessing in perpetual service.

Wednesday, June 10: We awoke to sixteen cases on the schedule Wednesday, six each General and GYN with four ENT. The day went smooth and our sterilization crew was able to exit the clinic by 7:30 that evening.



(One lucky guy and five lovely ladies.)

Thursday, June 11: Three ENT and nine general cases on tap for Thursday and we were done by 1:00 PM. Seventy-four cases for the week and one colposcopy. No trip to the lake year as recent groups encountered traffic delays, some as long as four hours. It was closer and much safer to make the short trip to the cacao farm. (Chocolate)

Everyone was safely back at Clinica Ezell well before dark and we enjoyed a final evening meal together before one more devotional and time of sharing.



Our nursing team for the week, a whole lot of loving on display!

All of our patients were discharged on Friday and the team made it safely to Antigua for a day of sightseeing, shopping and relaxing. A few in our group remained behind for an extended stay in Guatemala, while most of us departed Saturday. Flight delays and dysfunction in Houston baggage claim led to more than ten of us missing our flight home. After flying standby, all but four of us got home on the day we intended.



Epilogue: All patients returned for the post-operative checks and reported no complications. One team member, Tianna Mashburn, came down with the Chikungunya virus, but is doing fine. This is a reminder for all of us to use mosquito repellent.