

HEALTH TALENTS INTERNATIONAL
Surgery Clinic Trip Report
June 4-11, 2011

Team Members: Surgeons: Drs. Brian Camazine, A.D. Smith, Jerry Swale and Kim Washington; Anesthesiologist Drs. Chris Collie and Richard King; Nurses: Glenn Berkey, Natalia Burt, Mike Caldwell, Kelsey Camp, Laurie Cannon, JM Corella, Freda Gardner, Lauren Holmes, Jeanie Langston, Katrina Miller, Sandi Miller, Kathy Robertson, Aaron Towler, Cortney Willis, Surg Tech: Joe Calderon; Sterilization: Adam Cotter, Steve Cotter, Jesse Pettengill; Caregivers: Alex Caldwell, Maraya Camazine, Helen Blake-Forrest, Julie Ann Harper, Susan Harper, Alex Higginbotham, Molly Koch, Lisa Miller, Rachel Miller, Luke Robertson, Lily Smith, Laura Swale; Translators: Phillip Shockley, JoLee Thayer and Andrea Towler; Trip Chaplain: Tommy Gaither; Trip Leader: Rick Harper.

Due to flight schedules, several of our team members arrived in Guatemala on Friday night before meeting the majority of the team at the airport on Saturday morning. One of nurses, Sandi Miller, had her flight canceled out of Baltimore and she did not arrive until Saturday evening and two of our team members were missing their luggage. Nevertheless, we arrived safely on Saturday afternoon, unpacked and Sandi joined us on Sunday morning.

Our Guatemala team helped Rick and Susan Harper celebrate their 28th wedding anniversary that evening.



Sunday, June 5: We followed our normal Sunday schedule with a 2-hour church service and a medical orientation by Dr. Walter Sierra and Rosario Poncio, then lunch. Our six MET students living on the coast joined us that afternoon, eager to observe and participate with the surgical team. We completed nine cases that day, quite a large number of cases for a Sunday afternoon. As you might imagine, we worked a bit late that evening!

Monday, June 6: The surgical cases today were mostly hernias and things went quite smooth. However, one of our autoclaves began acting up and was taken out of commission for the remainder of the week. Each trip has a few memorable patients, and Ana was the first for this week. Ana was diagnosed with advanced breast cancer and will require radiation and chemotherapy as it had already spread to her lymph nodes. She also needed a mastectomy!

After consulting with Ana and her husband, it was determined that the best course of action was to have her mastectomy at Clinica Ezell and we would then work within the Guatemala healthcare system to help her obtain the additional treatment she needed. Her surgery was scheduled for Tuesday and non-stop prayers ensued. Tommy Gaither was our trip chaplain this week and he was a joy to be around. His evening devotionals dealt with a "Prescription from the Great Physician" and we were blessed to have Phillip Shockley lead our singing...what an incredible voice.

We finished the day with a total of 17 cases.

Tuesday, June 7: We had another seventeen cases scheduled for today and Ana was on everyone's mind. Lily Smith and Alex Caldwell began tearing bits of foam into small pieces for a pillow that would fit under Ana's arm and provide comfort during the healing process. JoLee was the pillow seamstress and with the help of Lisa Miller, they constructed two mastectomy bras for Ana to take home.

We also had a patient needing hernia repair and her gall bladder removed...an open procedure, not laparoscopic. Since open gall bladder surgery requires a lengthy recovery period, they are not an approved procedure. However, after Dr. Brian Camazine consulted with HTI board member and general surgeon, Dr. Danny Minor, over the phone an exception was granted and our patient did fine.

Dr. Jerry Swale joined us today, a special trip to for a couple of patients needing eye surgery procedures requiring general anesthesia. Dr. Swale regularly joins HTI's eye teams for cataract and pterygium surgery and this was the second time he has come for just a few days. When you realize he came all this way to only care for three patients, you know he possesses the heart of servant.

Wednesday, June 8: Our first patient was Angela, easily the most adorable patient of the week. Angela was "cross-eyed" (Strabismus for those who know medical terminology.) and Dr. Swale was here to correct that problem. (Mission accomplished.)



We completed eighteen surgeries today and had some late afternoon excitement when our remaining autoclave caught on fire when a fuse blew. Carlos, Phillip and Francisco jumped into action and we removed parts from one autoclave to the next we were back in business that evening. Fortunately, we do have a couple of table top autoclaves that would have allowed us to sterilize general surgery trays in the event our larger autoclaves were not working.

Thursday, June 9: We began the day with nine cases scheduled... lumps and bumps cases. However, our dentist, Dr. Silvia Albizures had a patient come in who was “cross-eyed” and she called for Dr. Swale. You would have thought Dr. Swale discovered gold when he determined she could help this young lady and as fortune, or God, would have it, she had not eaten and would be able to go under general anesthesia. So we ended up doing ten cases on Thursday and seventy-one for the week.

We were done with surgery shortly after noon and many in our group were able to enjoy a trip to Lake Atitlan or the waterfall in Xejeyp. Thursday afternoon was pretty quiet as many patients were heading home. As I walked through the recovery room I noticed Ana peering down her hospital gown, looking at her bandages...and what was no longer there. She was missing a part of herself and in its place was hope.

Ana will tell you that she was overwhelmed with love and affection throughout the week. From prayers, to comforting touches, to hugs and smiles Ana was shown the love of Christ. And we, the June surgical team 2011, were shown faith, humility and trust by those we came to serve.

