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Global Health Elective: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

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Global Health Elective: Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Medical Aid for Children of Latin America (MACLA)

Pediatric Anesthesiology

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Background

- The patients treated by MACLA are among the poorest in the Dominican Republic
- The impoverished populace has little or no access to quality care
- Treat patients with physical deformities such as cleft lips and palates, burn scar contractures, and soft tissue deformities

Objectives

- Deliver the same standard of care in an area with limited resources
- Gain experiences that will help me to be resourceful in my current approach to healthcare delivery
- Understand cultural impact on healthcare



Preparation

- Spoke to other providers who had traveled to the Dominican and participated in global health initiatives
- Inventory supplies (ETTs, LMAs, laryngoscope blades/handles of various sizes, syringes, drugs, etc)



Experience

- Patients come on foot, crowded buses, and cabs after hearing about us via word of mouth, television and radio
- Evaluate patients for surgery, set up the ORs, schedule patients, organize supplies, ensure equipment operational
- Team includes surgeons, anesthesiologists, CRNAs, PACU and OR nurses, scrub techs, PTs and OTs and the peace corps volunteers
- Perform 20-30 cases daily x 4 days

Reflection

- Learned to be innovative and problem solve as necessary due to limited supplies available all while delivering a safe anesthetic
- Challenging to assess patients for surgery and being unable to accept all patients
- Witnessed the differences in healthcare in a country whose healthcare system is federally regulated and resource limited
- The days were long but rewarding. I enjoyed restoring patients to the highest level of normalcy possible—physically, functionally and psychologically

Future Directions

- Continue to have global health be a part of my career
- Will join MACLA on future international trips

