

Surgical and Medical Eye Mission

May 6-11, 2012

Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic

For the third time I joined the “Dominican republic Eye Mission” organized by Island Impact Ministries (www.islandimpact.net) and dr. Kelly Hutcheson of Children’s National Medical Center, Washington DC, USA.



The aim of this mission is to perform eye surgeries (cataract, strabismus, pterygium and eyelids) and to provide glasses and eye care to indigent children and adults of the poorest province of the Dominican Republic.



Our team consisted of 24 volunteers: 5 eye surgeons, 1 anesthesiologist, 6 residents, 5 nurses, 1 translator and helpful family. I was the only orthoptist and I was in charge of the free eye clinic. During 6 days we worked fulltime in the public hospital “Ricardo Limardo” of Puerto Plata.



The first day, Sunday, we examined local-screened patients for strabismus, cataract and pterygium surgery which if possible were planned for operation the following days.



From Monday to Friday the surgical team performed 125 strabismus, cataract, pterygium and eyelid surgeries, while the other team concurrently ran the eye clinic,

offering eye glasses, patches, drops and triage for ophthalmic emergencies.



About 500 patients were examined and treated the best we could with reading glasses, sun glasses, occlusion or eye drops.



As there are no resources in Puerto Plata to draw upon, we had to bring all equipment and supplies needed for operation and eye examination. The ophthalmic community and medical companies were very generous in donating a great deal of the equipment and supplies needed.

But still we needed more eye glasses, drops and patches to help everybody. The material

which we did not use was left there for the local eye care providers.



This mission was again for me an unforgettable and satisfying experience, which I hopefully can repeat next year again with this wonderful team.

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