High Patient Volume in a Resource Limited Setting

GH2DP participants care for patients with little to no access to healthcare in a rural, tropical Latin America setting. Participants encounter a wide variety of illnesses, ranging from tropical infectious diseases such as dengue, intestinal helminth infections and Chagas disease to infectious dermatologic processes such as scabies and tinea. With an emphasis on clinical history and physical examination, trip participants learn key disease features and management in a resource limited setting.

A key focus of GH2DP is improving population health via "shoe leather" public health projects. Our keystone public health project is our water filter program. To date we have distributed 400 water filters, each of which can provide clean drinking water to an entire family for 2 years.

We also regularly perform mass de-worming according to W.H.O. standards, and have investigated numerous other issues over the years per the request of our community partners. These projects have included multiple needs assessment surveys, a barriers to healthcare access survey, a study looking at indoor air pollution and subsequent community education project, a Chagas disease knowledge survey, amongst other projects.

Find Out More:
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Since 2006 the VCU Department of Internal Medicine, via the Global Health & Health Disparities Program (GH2DP), has sent medicine residents, fellows and students to remote areas of Honduras to participate in direct medical relief work as well as public health projects.

We primarily serve patients in and around La Hicaca in the Department of Yoro area of Northern Honduras. This is a rural, mountainous area with limited to no access to medical care. Approximately 2,000 people live in this area across 17 different villages. Our brigades are designed to provide care to the majority of residents living in these villages.

Since 2006 we have involved approximately 20 medicine residents and fellows on these relief trips and have involved approximately 50 medical students, as well. We have seen nearly 11,000 patients and have helped to distribute, test and maintain over 400 water filters (each of which can provide clean water to an entire household for 2 years).

In terms of global health education, the GH2DP Residency Pathway is a 2 year experience offered to medicine residents that allows them in-depth clinical and research experience working in both Honduras and local free clinics. Additionally, the GH2DP Student Scholars Program allows medical students similar in-depth clinical and research opportunities.

“The trip to Yoro, Honduras has significantly altered my medical world view. It has shown me that academic, data driven efforts can be applied to resource poor settings and achieve real, sustainable good.”

-Dr. Jeff Wang