

**Surgical and Medical
Eye Mission
May 16-24, 2009
Puerto Plata,
Dominican Republic**

On May 16 I left early morning to the Dominican Republic for my first "Eye Mission" organized by Island Impact Medical Outreach and Dr. Kelly Hutcheson of Children's National Medical Center, Washington DC.

After a trip of 22 hours I reached in the evening my destination "Sosúa" a little village about 30 minutes away from the hospital we were going to work. The next morning I met the "screening team": 3 nurses, an ophthalmic technician and Kelli Nelson the founder of Island Impact. The whole Sunday we screened and examined patients for strabismus, cataract and pterygium surgery in the public hospital "Ricardo Limardo" of Puerto Plata.

On Sunday evening the rest of the team arrived: 5 eye surgeons, 2 anesthetists, 2 residents, a translator and helpful family.

From Monday to Friday the surgical team performed 60 strabismus, cataract and pterygium surgeries on indigent children and adults of this poorest province of the Dominican Republic.

The non- surgical team (1 orthoptist + 1 ophthalmic technician + 1 nurse) ran an eye clinic concurrently, offering eyeglasses, patches, drops and triage for ophthalmic emergencies. Hundred of patients were examined and treated the best we could with eyeglasses, 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 eyeglasses, drops and patches to help

everybody. The material, which we did not use, was left there for the local eye doctor.

Tired but satisfied we returned every evening to our hotel by local transport.

The team had never had the help of an orthoptist and was very pleased with my assistance. I could independently examine the pediatric and strabismic patients, do all the preoperative and postoperative ocular motility evaluations and eye measurements in the language of the local people (Spanish).

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

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