

HTC Foot Surgery Medical Mission to My Tho, Viet Nam 2005

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November 11-19, 2005

Traveling the distance to Viet Nam presented many new challenges to 23 team members who volunteered their time, their skills and their financial resources to provide surgical services to distant children in need. The extra large team included five translators as well as six members who worked the previous week on the Plastic Surgery Team, also from the Oregon and Western Washington Chapter of Healing the Children. Surgeons, anesthesiologists, family doctors, podiatrists, and a variety of OR support staff made up the rest of the team coming from California, New Jersey, Washington state, Germany and Australia. Dr. Susan Scanlan kept the team organized with the endless tasks of logistics as the Team Administrator while Johann Wassermann donated his computer skills to manage patient data, information forms and photographs. Greg Bastin and his wife Yen helped the team translators (Ha, Theresa, Allen and Doris) bridge the team into the Vietnamese culture. Dr. Stephen Miller kept the team focused as the Team Leader.



2005 Viet Nam Medical Mission Team



Surgeon Team

in during the week. Although the Foot Surgery Team has a primary interest in correcting the challenging clubfoot deformities, the majority of the pathology encountered on this trip was the result of polio. Consequently, the surgeries were more complex than originally anticipated, taking more of the team's time. By the end of the week 15 feet in 13 patients had undergone over 21 reconstructive procedures of various complexities. They included several posterior releases, tendon transfers, joint fusions including one pantalar arthrodesis, a fracture reduction, and two clubfoot repairs.

Except for those already there, most of the team arrived on Friday to check out Saigon, now officially called Ho Chi Minh City. On Saturday, the team traveled south by bus to tour the Mekong River Delta area in which the destination city of My Tho was located. It was an excellent education and introduction to the locale, ending on the bank of the north division of the Mekong River where the team settled in to the Chuong Duong Hotel.

On Sunday, work began by meeting the staff at the Tien Giang General Hospital who were the hosts for the medical mission. Tien Giang is the name of the province in which My Tho is located.

The team then screened the first 20 children for potential reconstructive foot surgery; others trickled

One of the goals of the team was to provide education when invited. Towards the end of the week, the surgeons, lead by Dr. Matt Williams, gave separate lectures and demonstrations to the hospital nurses and doctors on the Ponseti Casting Technique for the Correction of Clubfoot, a method that can obviate the need for surgery. Dr. Miller then presented the hospital Department of Orthopedics with \$45,000 worth of large and small fragment screw sets, while Dr. Boegel provided surgical textbooks on foot and ankle surgery and Dr. Olms donated a number of bone anchors and specialty sutures. Dr. Vi, the director of the hospital, and Dr. Duong of the Department of Orthopedics were surprised and grateful. The surgeons spent their last day at the hospital teaching Dr. Duong about the various internal fixation instruments and devices which they provided him. He invited them into his operating room where ideas on trauma surgery were shared. The team also left a large amount of cast material, dressing supplies and surgical gowns to help provide postoperative care for the children.



Training session



Fracture repair, Dr. Miller

This mission received a much appreciated \$1,000 donation from the

Anacortes Rotary Club to help defray some of the costs of getting equipment and supplies to Viet Nam. The team is also grateful for all the help from the staff at Healing the Children in Seattle, and to corporate donors, especially DePuy Orthopaedics International (fixation devices), BSN Medical (casting supplies), K-Medic (medical instruments), and Kimberly-Clark (surgical gowns).

In the end, bridges were established, friendships made and the lives of children changed forever.

“Healing the world.....one child at a time.”



Typical Clubfoot



2 y.o. clubfeet



After clubfoot repair



Patient and surgeons



Checking her cast



Post-op rounds, Dr. Miller