Development of a collaborative dermatology resident outreach program in Lake Atitlán, Guatemala

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SUMMARY

In recent years, the Penn department of dermatology has aspired to develop a collaborative partnership and educational program in conjunction with INDERMA, a dermatology residency training program based in Guatemala City, Guatemala. The program has involved INDERMA residents and attendings visiting and rotating in Philadelphia, and Penn residents and attendings visiting the INDERMA facilities based at a former leprosy hospital outside of Guatemala City. Each year, two Penn dermatology residents, under the supervision and guidance of two Penn dermatology attendings, join residents and faculty from INDERMA to establish a week of clinics in the rural communities surrounding Lake Atitlán. We hope to grow this collaboration into a sustainable model of dermatology care in Atitlán that supports educational goals for both Penn and INDERMA residents and inspires interest in global health.

GOALS

- Establish connection between two international dermatology programs
- Encourage Penn residents’ interest in developing country/global health
- Encourage INDERMA residents’ interest in collaboration, support of their local underserved communities, and introduce them to American medical practice
- Educate residents on medical care in resource-limited environments
- Build framework for sustainable models of care (e.g. telederm connecting Guatemala City and local dermatologists with the rural Guatemalan populations)

RESULTS

In 3 years of development, we have made several trips to Guatemala.

In 2014, trip made with Penn faculty pairing with INDERMA residents; two INDERMA residents and INDERMA faculty visited Penn.

In 2015, first year trip made with two Penn dermatology residents, two faculty, two INDERMA residents, and one INDERMA faculty; two INDERMA residents and INDERMA faculty visited Penn.

In 2016, second trip with Penn residents planned; hoping to collaborate with Penn Global Health Fellows for more sustainable year-round care.

Example of care delivered in 1 week in collaboration (2015):

In one week, established 4 local clinic days at 7 sites, with 333 patients seen, 4 excisions, 5 biopsies, and 23 patients treated with cryotherapy.

Most common diagnoses seen: acne, atopic dermatitis, scabies, melasma, warts, actinic dermatitis/actinic prurigo.

Rare cases included a patient with previously undiagnosed hypohidrotic ectodermal dysplasia.