

"The Sight of You Is What I Want To Have....."

As I sit on this plane leaving the shores of Montego Bay, Jamaica, I can not help to reflect and embrace the memories of the new friends and patients I have made in treasure beach during this years (July 2015) medical mission. This trip for me was my first experience as a young attending (freshly graduated from residency) where I helped lead a team of 14 1st year medical students, 2 residents, 1 nurse and two assistants through a clinic that was arranged to help the indigent population of treasure beach. The journey started with a 3 hour bus ride down through the interior of Jamaica where the roads had more pot holes than actual road. What fortune we have to only see an occasional one.

The medical students were anxious and eager as this was the first time they would be able to touch and talk to a real patient. Each one of them individually brought items of medications that they wanted to donate and were ready and eager to help, humbly realizing their own clinical skill limitations. However I have never met a more eager group to learn. The medical mission could not have been better organized with the precise and charming leadership by Miranda an internal medicine 2nd year resident from Tampa who was able to obtain donated pharmaceuticals from Johnson and Johnson. We were also very lucky to have the friendly, loving, positive energy of Collen (Coco) a nurse who I work with from Fort Worth, whose contagious smile lit up every patient who had the opportunity of meeting her. She was a blessing to me as she made it a priority to make sure I was hydrated, fed, and stayed cool during our clinic days where the temperature of the room easily climbed to over 100 deg Fahrenheit.

We averaged 50 patients a day. They came in every walk of life you could imagine, the community's preacher, the farmers, the fisherman, the children, and the 83 year olds that walked in to my make shift clinic room without a cane, walking upright and kept thanking The Lord for sending me to them. The appreciation and gratitude of these patients can not be described in words. There was however, one patient who has forever changed me.

It was middle of the afternoon and I had already lost track of how many patients I had seen. As I quickly took a seat to rest and clear my head before the next patient, in comes this blind man with a long gray beard and what he called his "portable eyes" which is the name he used for his walking stick he had used all his life as he has never had sight before. This gentleman was in his 60s and had the purest smile I've seen on a human being, who although had many teeth missing quickly became positively contagious to the 4 medical students in the room who had been rotating with me that afternoon. After addressing his health issues, he quietly had one request, "could I please pray with all of you?" As we all stood, this spiritually charged man took the lead in prayer with conviction that I have never experienced.

As he stood asking for us all to stand, we all bowed our heads. As we prayed, all the heat, the stinging Mosquitos, fears of ChikV virus, thirst, and the sweat dripping off our brows, quickly became insignificant as we all realized this event is a rarity. What came next surprised us all as this gentleman made one request to God, "please god, as you know I am a man who has had no sight in this life, but god I am asking you, and praying today, that at some point in your kingdom please restore my vision with the desire to see the doctor and thank him for what he has come to do for me and my people of Treasure Beach." As he got up and was assisted out of our room, not a single eye was dry from the sincere gratitude this man had just placed to us. Little did he know, we realized at that moment how fortunate WE are to possess these blessings and skills to be able to take care of patients like him and get this level of gratitude--something I haven't experienced in my career thus far.

I return now to you with this new perspective on life and my calling. What I have learned can be summarized best by an 81 year old I met who looked half his age and told me, "take care of your body and your mind doctah! when you are young, and you will reap the benefits when you become old." Simple and to the point, so let's all run with this.

I encourage all of you to take some time and do a trip like this, your life will be changed forever. Surprisingly, with such a physically and mentally demanding trip, I'm minimally fatigued. Will be shifting gears back to life as a new attending, now with a new awareness. My love and greetings from Jamaica,
One love, Omesh Singh D.O.