



# GHEC

Global Health Education Consortium



## During Your Global Health Elective

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# Learning Objectives

1. Become aware of factors important for travel safety and convenience
2. Anticipate stress points and how to deal with them
3. Consider how to make your clinical experience maximally beneficial
4. Plan to participate in a way that benefits patients and co-workers

## Some Desirable Outcomes

- Self understanding of tolerance levels
- New skills and knowledge, language acquisition
- Academic credit
- Satisfaction that you can perform in exotic settings
- Finding direction for future learning emphases
- Developing an experience level that opens doors for further opportunities

# Arriving at the Airport

- Carry information on address where you will be staying for filling out the customs form while on the plane
- Have at hand passport, visa, and details of medical supplies being brought in to the country with a letter stating that they are donations.
- Maintain control of all of your bags or delegate this to a travel companion
- Be prepared for some discussion with a customs agent about the use of medications, their expiration dates, etc
- Know how to access U.S. embassy, [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)
  - Consider leaving contact information with the Consulate

# Making Connections

- Know the name of your contact person and how to recognize them.
- Have contact phone numbers. Investigate cell phone availability.
- Take their advice for transferring luggage, paying tips, exchanging money.
- Pick a travel buddy if going in a group.
- Always let someone know if you will be going out of sight of the group, and ideally go with your buddy.
- Obtain safe water to drink while traveling.
- Make sure that you and your luggage are going to the correct place.

# Healthy Travel

- Use seat belts if available.
- When traveling alone, use recommended safe conveyances.
- Request special seating if needed, e.g. Up front by a window to prevent motion sickness.
- Keep your personal medical kit at close hand.
- Give plenty of notice for toileting needs.
- Try not to distract the driver since defensive driving requires constant attention.

# What to wear?



- Appropriate for the task
- Cool and wicking when in the heat
- Not too revealing. Long pants or skirt may be best when in public
- Shoes that will stay comfortable
- Layers when changing weather or altitude
- Sun, dust & bug protection

# Personal Care and Hygiene



- Water bottle and sterilization method
- Appropriate clothes for anticipated temperatures
- Comfortable, durable shoes, sandals and socks
- Rain jacket, swimming suit
- Toiletry items, toilet paper
- Towel and washcloth



# Financial issues

- Carry a small amount of local cash
  - Amount depends on desire to shop
- Travelers checks and credit cards may not be accepted
  - Carry some U.S. cash
- Carry financial items in 2 or 3 places
  - wallet (petty cash)
  - money belt (large bills)
  - neck and/or belt pouch (passport, exit fees, tickets, bank and credit cards, travel insurance cards)

## Financial issues

- Have a copy of your passport, insurance info, credentials and itinerary in separate locations from originals
- Carry a calculator to determine fair exchange rates.
- Don't pack valuables in check-in luggage
- ATM exchange – consider transaction charges

## Personal safety risks

- Stay alert for dangers, e.g., dogs while running
- Know the rules to avoid danger
  - Use the buddy system
  - Avoid danger areas and time periods
  - Don't display money or valuables
- Protect against sexual misadventures
- Call out early for help (if possible in local language)
- Don't fight to protect what can be replaced

# Illness Prevention Items

- Antiseptic hand cleanser
- Insect repellent, mosquito net
- Sun screen, lip balm
- Hat, bandana or dust mask
- Eye drops (artificial tears)
- Personal medical kit



## Items for Personal Medical Kit

- Band-Aids, gauze and adhesive tape
- Scissors, tweezers, safety pins
- Mole skin, felt pads, superglue
- Antibiotic, steroid and antifungal creams
- Oral thermometer
- Feminine sanitary supplies

# “Don’t Drink the Water”

- Drink bottled water (or soft drinks) until certain that public sources are safe - be careful brushing teeth and showering
  - Even public systems using chlorination may be inadequately filtered and treated
  - Use a backpacking filtering system and chlorine (or iodine) if purified water is not available
  - Filtering buckets are being promoted in rural communities
- Soak washed dishes in chlorinated water (4 drops per quart of 5% sodium hypochlorite X 1hour+)

# Treating Travelers Diarrhea

- If mild - no therapy, loperamide, or bismuth subsalicylate plus oral rehydration fluid
- If moderate to severe - Rifaximine (200 mg tid for 3 days) or fluoroquinolone (Ciprofloxin 500 mg bid for 1 - 3 days)
- If bloody stool (dysentery) - fluoroquinolone for 3 days
- Use Azithromycin for 3 days for children, pregnant women, treatment failures or if the illness was acquired in Thailand.

# Medications for Personal Medical Kit

- Diarrhea treatment (quinolone, bismuth subsalicylate, Loperamide)
- Malaria prophylaxis, if indicated (check CDC for appropriate drugs for area to be visited)
- Acetazolamide for high altitudes
- Pain medications (acetaminophen, NSAIDS)
- Respiratory treatments (decongestants, anti-histamines, inhalers)
- Motion sickness treatment (meclizine, scopolamine, etc).  
Prochlorpromazine suppository for vomiting
- Personal chronic and rescue medications



# Comfort Items

- Pillow, sheets, ear plugs, blind fold
- Extra glasses, sun glasses, contacts supplies
- Personal music, batteries
- Snacks, chewing gum
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Personal journal, books

# Ethical Challenges in International Health Work

- Potentially self serving and not patient centered
- May raise unmeetable expectations
- Misguided interventions ineffective in long term
- Lacking public health perspective
- Imposing burdens on local health facilities
- Health care delivery substandard by U.S metrics
- No input from patients and local providers

# Guiding Educational Principles

- Have a sense of the groups' common purpose
- Collaborate with community and health infrastructure
- Educate selves, patients, community, and peers
- Serve as the community wants and needs
- Build members' skills & experience through teamwork
- Make interventions that build capacity and sustainability
- Seek feedback about goal accomplishment

## Students Learn Through:

- Active interactions with local people
- Visits to patient's home and community
- Participation in data collection with timely feedback
- Discussion of patient's problems and adaptations
- Making treatment plans using team approach
- Correlation with their own future medical practice
- Discussion of challenges with the larger group

## **Learners Care about Diseases that are:**

- Important and detectable with available tests
- Treatable using accessible, sustainable resources
- Interfering with people's ability to work and learn
- Paralleled by challenges experienced in the U.S.
- Amenable to patient, family and local health care worker management

# Clinical experiences



- Obtain details of the daily schedule and holidays during the time that you will be there.
- Establish a contact person and precepting physician
- Give preceptor the form for your evaluation at the beginning
- Bring the clinical tools that will be useful there.
- Determine how many learners will be overlapping your experience
- Clarify the expectations for time off

## Notes on: Clinical experiences

If you have the time to go as far as Progreso, located 25 km (14 miles) from San Pedro Sula, besides enjoying the banana plantations, and maybe even going into one of them, you should not miss the Turiplaza - IMAPRO handicraft school. This unique artisans school gives you the opportunity to see artisans at work carving wood. They only carve fine mahogany boards, and their pieces are real works of art. They have an ample selection of finished work on exhibit, all of which are for sale, and best of all, you can use your credit card to pay for it. Where else do you have the opportunity to purchase a handicraft and actually meet the artisan who made it? Prices are good and they are fixed, so don't try bartering here. Turiplaza offers the largest and finest selection of handicrafts and souvenirs in Central America. They also boast sparkling clean bathrooms and a small cafeteria. If you don't have time to go to Progreso, visit the IMAPRO store in San Pedro, located on 1 Calle between 4 and 5 Avenidas N.E. They have a fine selection of souvenirs and wood carvings.

<http://www.imapro-honduras.com/imaproinformatin.htm>

# Communication During Clinics

- Be realistic about your communication abilities
- Discuss with interpreters the preferred mode of working together
  - Ask for information on cultural factors, home remedies and alternative practitioners
- Be willing to help wherever needed
- Limit constructive criticism
- Be open to the recommendations of clinicians experienced in local provision of care



# Cultural Humility Requires:

- Willingness to be open to beliefs that conflict with your own
- Self-examination for your own cultural biases
- Awareness that other cultures are as functional as your own
- Interacting with a goal of mutual understanding
- Recognition that cultural competency is a long-term goal

# Professional Tools

- Electronic thermometer & covers
- Stethoscope and BP cuff
- Oto-ophthalmoscope exam kit
- Mini-reference books or PDA, possibly computer
- Examination gloves of your size
- Camera, watch
- Copy of credentials

# What to Do With a Free Day

- Take a hike in a safe way to get perspective on the community
- Visit the residence of a home-bound patient
- Make a presentation or just observe in the local school
- Participate in a research or public health project
- Work with the public health nurse
- Accompany a midwife on a home delivery
- Tour the district hospital
- Work with an instructor to improve your language skills

# Home Visits



- Learn the culturally appropriate way to approach a home
- Make clear the reasons for your visit
  - Will you be diagnosing and treating
  - What is the purpose of the questionnaire
- Ask permission to make observations of the home and environs
- Graciously decline risky food and drink
- Explain follow-up plans

# Home Visits Reveal



- Terrain and other environmental challenges
- Water sources and handling
- Sanitary conditions (e.g., latrine vs.. open air toileting)
- Cooking facilities (e.g., inside without chimney)
- Food production and storage
- Furniture and other adaptations made for disabilities
- Exposure to and health of animals

# School Visitation

- Observe how conducive the setting is to learning (furniture, books, supplies, distractions)
- Discuss challenges (e.g., strikes, low pay) with teachers and parents
- See the effects of hunger and feeding programs
- Do an active educational program, e.g. teach teeth brushing and apply dental varnish)
- Learn requirements for attending (uniforms?) and opportunities for continuing into higher grades

# Participation in Studies

- Promotes interaction with patients and families in non-clinical settings
- Facilitates entrance into homes, work places, etc.
- Provides an organized approach to gathering information about a problem area
- Encourages use of non-medical vocabulary

# Understanding the Medical System

- Learn the structure of the country's medical system
- Interview to learn how various government health professionals have adapted to working in that system
- Learn the goals and methods of NGO's working in the area and question an employee about what is working
- Interview patients to gain their perspective on the utility of the medical system and NGO's
- Interview a private practitioner to understand how their work interacts with the public and NGO health systems



# Return Travel

- Reconfirm your reservations
- Allow time for unexpected delays along the way
- Clear with everyone concerned your plans for recreation along the way.
- Consider staying at a hotel near the airport to insure arrival 2 hours before your flight
- Put all restricted items in the check-in luggage.
- Remember to put put duty free liquid items into check-in luggage after customs but before giving them back to the airline.

# Summary

- Your international medicine experience is most likely to be successful if you:
  - Plan ahead and prepare for potential problems
  - Work as a team player
  - Seek opportunities to learn by doing
  - Observe and participate in health promotion and patient care in a variety of settings

# General References

## Papers

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## Books

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## Credits

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