

Monday, October 10, 2011

Mr. Salah M. Hassanein
Chairman
&
Mr. David George
Executive Director
Children's Lifeline International

MEDICAL MISSION TO PANAMA PERFORMING CARDIAC ABLATIONS ON CHILDREN FROM THE HOSPITAL DEL NIÑO, WEEK OF OCTOBER 3, 2011

For the third time in the past six years the team of pediatric cardiologists from Oregon Health and Science University specializing in ablations on children has visited the Hospital del Niño (H de N), the public hospital dedicated to providing health care to the poor children of Panama. The team is comprised of Dr Seshadri Balaji, Dr Jack Kron, Nurse Diana Scolaro-Cook and the technical support from Mr. Ron Oliver. The team arrived Saturday evening October 1, 2011 with four huge boxes of supplies, thanks to the financial support of Children's Lifeline International who paid for supplies and travel expenses.

Sunday, rather than having a relaxing day after a grueling trip, they went directly to the Hospital del Niño to meet with the medical director, Dr Alberto Bissot, and their two Panamanian pediatric cardiologists counterparts. Monday morning they were transported to the Homodynamic Laboratory of Hospital Punta Pacifica (a Johns Hopkins Hospital affiliate). The Hospital del Niño does not have the facilities to perform the ablations; therefore, the Fundacion Obsequio de Vida (The Gift of Life Foundation Panama) pays for the use of the laboratory during the week of the medical mission. Even though the Punta Pacifica Hospital offers us a special preferential rate, there is still a fee.

The process is the following. Many of the patients are from remote locations around the country. The patients/children with parents travel to the city of Panama and are admitted to the Hospital del Niño the day before the ablation procedure. They are examined and prepared for transportation to Hospital Punta Pacifica Hospital the next day. They are accompanied by a nurse and resident physician. The staff in the laboratory is made up of the H de N anesthesiologist, nurses, the in house biomedical specialist and Panamanian cardiologist with the US Team. The schedule is for two patients on the first day and for three patients the three succeeding days for a total of eleven (11) patients. Once the child is operated and the physicians are satisfied with their recovery, they are transported back to the H de N to a special ward set aside for them. The following morning, if all is well, they return home ready for a new life. From the eleven cases, eight were curative and three turned out to be diagnostic for a future date.

During the week Nurse Diana, in addition to working in the laboratory, assisted in the H de N ICU with her very good friend Dr Maria Johnson. She stayed for a couple of extra days since she was offering a seminar to the ICU team. Dr Balaji and Dr Kron were

invited as special guests to the Panama Pediatric Cardiology Association evening meeting where they were offered the opportunity to make a presentation to the Panamanian cardiologists.

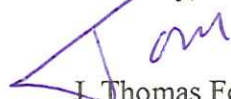
The visit by the Oregon Health and Science University team offers not only answers to our children but the opportunity of interchange between the visiting and local physicians.

The ablation team has been programmed to come every two years since the numbers of cases are not many. The local cardiologists are limited in their capacity to diagnose children with arrhythmias since they need an uncomplicated procedure to determine if children are experiencing the symptoms. We have been told that there is a simple patch application that allows the parent to activate a button on the patch when a child is having a seizure. Later the patch is read in the clinic by the use of special equipment. This is much more cost effective than the expensive halter diagnostic equipment. We need help in locating and purchasing this patch system.

Over the years, beginning with the visits of Dr Ross Ungerleader, the children of Panama have been blessed with the financial support received from Children's Lifeline International for the visits of Dr Ross and his team as well as Dr Michael (Dooley) Womack who comes twice a year to perform both curative and diagnostic catherizations. Thanks to this support, the local pediatric cardiologists today are performing many of the procedures taught by Dr Womack and with each visit he helps them specialize and perfect procedures. Dr Balaji and Dr Kron come once every two years to perform ablations. In the past we have had teams to teach Pediatric Advance Lifesaving techniques (PALS) and it is time for them to return to update the locals. Fundacion Obsequio de Vida (Gift of Life Foundation of Panama) finances the local expenses such as hotels, laboratories and all of the necessary logistics such as all of the authorizations required, local contacts, etc.

Let's face it, Children's Lifeline International and Panama Gift of Life Foundation make a good team and many children are benefitted. What a gratifying feeling! Thanks Salah and thanks to Annie Mendenhall who introduced us many years ago!

Sincerely,



J. Thomas Ford

President,

Fundacion Obsequio de Vida Panamá

NURSE DIANA SORTING THE SUPPLIES BROUGHT FOR THE MISSION



DOCTORS BALAJI AND KRON REVIEWING CASE WITH DR MORALES & FERNANDEZ



FAMILY MEMBERS IN WAITING AREA WITH NURSE DIANA AND MEMBERS OF PANAMA GIFT OF LIFE



THE OHSU MEDICAL TEAM WITH THEIR PANAMANIAN COUNTERPARTS FROM HOSPITAL DEL NIÑO AND NURSE DIANA WITH THE HEAD OF THE HOSPITAL DEL NIÑO ICU CHIEF DR MARIA JOHNSON



YES, THE TEAM DOES WORK! PREPARING A CHILD TO BE TAKEN UNDER
THE SKILLFUL CARE OF DR BALAJI



EMANUEL A INDIGENOUS CHILD FROM THE KUNA NATION WITH HIS MOTHER NITZELIA BEFORE AND AFTER THE ABLATION PROCEDURE AND THEN PLACED IN THE AMBULANCE TO RETURN TO THE HOSPITAL DEL NIÑO

