



## **My experience with the CASEC Medical Mission**

Being in a country where volunteerism is a novice idea, my first impressions about the CASEC mission organized by the Patcha Foundation were nothing short of awe and admiration. I felt very privileged to be accepted as a volunteer in the 2015 medical mission.

When I arrived at the house of the country director, Mrs. Jacquie Patcha, I immediately felt a sense of belonging. It was like working with an old team. Yet this was my very first meeting with everyone present. We then took off to Edea where we began the first part of our project, and subsequently to Kribi.

One thing that took me aback was the level of poverty and ignorance amongst patients. Many people had been diagnosed of chronic illnesses such as hypertension, but had never been to the hospital for treatment in the last two years. I was particularly taken aback by the case of an epileptic who had been left to her fate for five years, since she became epileptic at 1. Being mentally retarded, no one ever thought it right to seek medical care until the free health campaign. For such a case, though severe brain damage had already occurred, an anticonvulsant was prescribed and she was referred to see a neuropaediatrician in nearby Douala. Also, amongst the numerous cases I came across, I was struck by the high levels of STDs and secondary infertility levels (usually due to blocked tubes resulting from scarring caused by these STDs); even in girls as young as 21. For those with acute infections, I prescribed antibiotics for both partners. Unfortunately for those in whom I suspected infertility, I counseled them on various diagnostic and management options, while referring them to gynaecologists.

I was happily surprised to know that we would be working in close partnership with George Bwelle of ASCOVIME and the Shishong Cardiac Center. A few things still need to be put in place to make things better next time. I will recommend that a close look be taken at the prevalent illnesses in a chosen site so that more appropriate drugs could be bought. We had lots of malarial and filarial cases but had nothing to treat them with. However, I would say this mission was a success and I look forward to participating in the 2016 medical mission.

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