

Learning and Working in El Salvador
Report of Visits and Work with Unidades de Salud and ECOS Familiares
Northern Micro-Region
El Salvador + 29 September to 22 October, 2014
Debrah Adams & Linda Muth

Part I: Observations

The following is a summary of the time we spent observing and learning in different locations. Information about diagnoses and protocols is noted on the first occasion when we discussed it, though conversations about symptoms, diagnoses and treatments were held in several locations. We were welcomed warmly by each director, physician, nurse and promoter with whom we worked. We are especially grateful to Dra. Etelvina Chiquillo, who invited us to make this study. We are also grateful to the pastors of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church who assisted us in making connections with local healthcare providers and to all of the personnel of the Unidades de Salud and ECOS familiares who shared their work with us.

30 September + Unidad de Salud Guazapa

Meeting with Dr. Aguilar Garcia, Director

- Accompanied by Pra. Gloria Orantes, Pr. Matias Bonilla and Carmen of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church
- Mission of Healing North 2015
 - Feb 3 = Guazapa's day at Mission of Healing North 2015
 - Team from Guazapa can come to provide dental care and pap smears
 - Guazapa Team can bring contraception
 - Urgent cases come on Feb 4 to Guazapa lab for work; less urgent cases can wait
 - All emergencies and ambulance should be coordinated through Dra. Chiquillo
 - It is good we will use the same medications and same protocols as the Salvadoran system to help build confidence among the people
- For dengue – check a blood test 15 days after fever (only 1 in 10 suspected cases are tested due to volume and cost)
- If 5 or more are sick in a family – house visit is made
- Chikungunya symptoms – can't straighten up or stand; fever; joint pain; caution using acetaminophen because liver can be affected. Both dengue and chik have a rash, chik itches and patient feels better in 7 days; if it lasts longer than 7 days it is dengue
- Pregnant women and chronic disease (HT and diabetes) patients with chik are hospitalized for 2 days of observation
- Malnutrition and anemia are problems
- No ECO



Observing Dr. Hernandez

- Protocol: Aspirin 100 mg daily for HT and Diabetes
- Noted which medications to order for HT, Diabetes and allergies

- TB patients come to the clinic 3 times per week for treatment
- 1 ambulance for Guazapa, El Paisnal, entire zone and they load it up before they send it (this means patients are delayed in getting to the hospital)



Pharmacy

- Noted some medications were needed for pain and infection
- Without a specialist on staff the pharmacy cannot stock certain meds (example: no ob/gyn = only metronidazole is stocked)
- Pregnant women receive iron, calcium and folic acid

Laboratory

- Old equipment and some that does not function
- Test tubes and slides are washed and re-used but time is limited to complete this task

1 & 2 October + ECO & Unidad de Salud in San Pedro Puxtla

Work with ECO of Dra. Lidixe Montoya in Las Chacon

- This visit was not in the Northern Micro-Region and does not impact the planning for the Mission of Healing 2015
- Observations from this visit will be shared with the SIBASI coordinator of the region

3 October + Unidad de Salud Distrito Itailia

Meeting with Dr. Jose Samuel Quinteras, Director

- Accompanied by Francisco Garcia, Sonia Fuentes and Pra. Gloria Orantes of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church
- Mission of Healing 2015
 - Can provide support with permission of SIBASI Norte (Dr. Christopher Rodriguez)
 - Mental Health Care team is available and travels to other Unidades in the northern zone; they are interested in participating in the Mission of Healing
 - No ECO or health promoters (considered an urban area)
 - Challenge: staff members use their own cell phones because the cable has been stolen from the Unidad – this impacts all communication including emergency calls
- Thorough tour of facility – small but fairly well-stocked pharmacy



3 October + Unidad de Salud in Tonacatepeque

Meeting with a Physician

- Accompanied by Sonia Fuentes, Francisco Garcia and Pra. Gloria Orantes of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church
- Director ill with chikungunya
- Discussed Mission of Healing 2015
 - Team from Tonaca can participate with permission
 - Team will need transportation



6 to 10 October + Unidad de Salud, Nejapa (coordinated by Dra. Etelvina Chiquillo, Director)

6 October – Meeting with SIBASI Norte

- Traveled to Popotlan to meet with Dr. Christopher Rodriguez, regional director of SIBASI Norte.
- Send plans for Mission of Healing 2015 by October 31, 2014
- National director of SIBASI will need to approve staff going into another zone to work at the Mission of Healing



6 October – Observations in the Nejapa Clinic

- Accompanied by Pra. Gloria (worked in Archives) and Carmen (gave HIV charlas), both from Salvadoran Lutheran Church
- Learned about the campaign to collect breast milk for use with premature babies in the hospital. The program has been very successful and is the only one in the country. We can support it with donated breast pumps and gowns.
- Licenciada nurses provide much of the preventative and well-care check-ups



7 October – Community Visit with Dra. Chiquillo and Team

- Accompanied by Carmen from the Salvadoran Lutheran Church – she gave HIV charlas in the AM
- Went by bus with Dra. Chiquillo, nurse and promoter to investigate the death of a 2-year old child from malnutrition and check on a severely malnourished 6-year old in the same home. Family refused vaccination. Suspected abuse by the male member of the household. Female victims will not disclose.
- Returned to the clinic by foot, walking along the San Antonio River and connecting with families along the way
- Visited the radio station (run by the youth) – Dra. Chiquillo has a health education program 30 minutes each week.

7 October – Community Meeting at Civil Protection Site (Casa de Juventud)

- Multiple organizations were present to review and plan response to the current outbreak of chikungunya and dengue. There are 20 communities in the district. There have been 2 deaths

from dengue (people with chronic disease) and 3 childhood deaths that were preventable with timely care (not related to chik or dengue).

- Noted the absence of Pra. Abelina of Fe y Esperanza in La Granja – later shared information about events occurring in La Granja, Nuevo Ferrocarril and Nueva Esperanza with church leaders

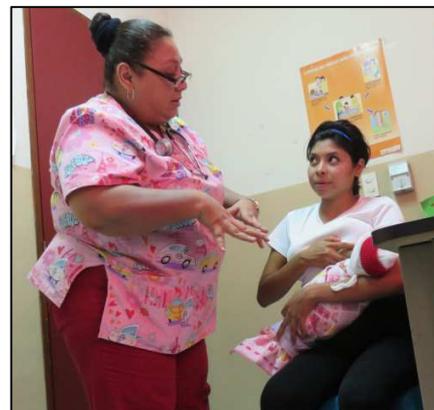


8 October – Self-care Mental Health Event (AM)

- Accompanied by Pra. Gloria Orantes of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church
- Psychologist and psychiatrist based in Distrito Italia had been invited to run a self-care event for the staff of the Unidad de Salud in Nejapa. The other half of the staff will have the same experience at a later time.
- Impressive that this type of event is available when requested by Unidades throughout the north
- The staff seemed less stressed following the event

8 October – Observations at the Unidad de Salud in Nejapa (PM)

- Observed Dra. Rosales with patients
- Note: we need to align our patient instructions with what the Unidades give so that patients are not confused
- Patients are required to sign their charts after everything has been recorded and explained. Those who cannot sign give a thumbprint.
- Observed the Selección process and learned about how patients are triaged and how consult times are managed for nurses and doctors. We discussed how we can improve our system of triage at the Mission of Healing.



9 October – Home visits with Promotora Yanira on the San Salvador volcano

- Walked into different communities off of the main paved road
- All water is collected from the rain, using roof gutters and rain barrels. It is sanitized for drinking by filling clear plastic bottles and leaving them in the sun to expose them to UV rays. Some collection systems were very sophisticated and families had large tanks. Others were simple, covered barrels.
- All children were weighed and checked by Yanira.
- During the check-ups, Yanira talked with every woman about the importance of Pap smears. She emphasized good nutrition, especially how to increase iron intake.
- Yanira can dispense medications including acetaminophen, cough medicine, parasite medicine and administers vaccines and contraception including condoms.
- During the afternoon, Yanira spends hours at the Casa de Salud doing paperwork. Community members know they can stop by for advice, check-ups or any health need. The people in the communities know and trust her. Her presence is VITAL to the health of this community and we were extremely impressed with her work.



10 October – Home visits with Licda. Nurse and 2 health promoters

- Walked in Comunidad Suchinanguio and visited 74 homes to check vaccination records for children under the age of 5 years
- Found only one home where a vaccine was needed, and the nurse administered it. The nearly 100% vaccination rate was impressive.
- There was a lot of garbage in the streets and streams of gray water running down the dirt streets. Mosquitoes do not breed in the soapy water, but can breed where rain water collects. The health promoters checked pilas and receptacles for larvae habitat. Old tires were emptied and residents were told to fill them with soil.
- We also visited a beauty school (within the public school) to learn about efforts being made to help people be self-sufficient and improve their overall health.



10 October – Pharmacy tour at Unidad in Nejapa

- Extensive tour to learn about what laboratories provide what medications
- Noted that contraception (other than condoms) is often not available in the Unidad pharmacies
- Noted that Metformin is not produced by anyone in El Salvador but is imported from India

13 – 15 October + ECO in Rutilio Grande (Unidad de Salud, El Paisnal) **(Coordinated by Dra. Patricia Lopez, Director)**

13 October: Meeting with Dra. Lopez and tour of the clinic

- Very small space, but efficiently used
- Discussed future possibility of taking blood samples in the community and transporting them to the Unidad in El Paisnal so patients would not have to travel
- Each Unidad & ECO have community maps which show every home in their regions, and which use color codes to show risk levels and to map pregnancies



13 October: Visit in Dimas Rodriguez with promoter Juan Napoleon (Napo)

- Accompanied Napo on a thorough inspection of all standing water around homes for mosquito larvae. (Only larvae were found on a lid at the local clinic.) Napo taught residents about care of water/prevention of chikungunya. People all know and trust him.
- Visited a 44 year old woman with one leg (due to polio as a child) who has poor circulation in her leg and foot. Amazing woman walks with crutches, even long distances. Was depressed and seemed cheered by the visit.
- Rode to El Paisnal with the team to return their



supplies. The new Unidad de Salud clinic there is beautiful and modern. Dra. Ochoa gave us a tour.

14 October: Visit with Dr. Ochoa and the ECO team (licenciada nurse, promoter, technical nursing student) to Santiago Torres.

- The community is reached from Rutilio Grande by a ride in the pick up; then a walk across a suspension bridge over the Rio Sucio. A woman with suspected appendicitis rode with us from Rutilio Grande. After dropping us off, the driver took her to El Paisnal to get an ambulance ride to the hospital.
- This was an extra visit in the community, as Dra. Ochoa had heard many people were sick. Usually there is a clinic held in the school the first Monday of each month. The health problems of the people are exacerbated by poverty and the remoteness of the community.
- We visited homes with tragic circumstances.



15 October: Visits in Rutilio Grande with Dra. Ochoa and Promoter Juanita

- Dra. Lopez saw patients in the clinic (visits weekly on Wed).
- Home visits are made to people who have recently been ill, have special needs or have missed clinic appointments for chronic conditions like hypertension.
- One patient had a BP of 200/100. He had stopped taking his medications because he feels fine. This is a challenge we face during the Mission of Healing and we discussed the need for education in this area.
- Dra. Ochoa returned to the clinic to help Dra. Lopez see patients, so the staff could have a lunch break with us. Dr. Christopher (SIBASI) made a surprise supervisory visit.

16 October + Nueva Concepcion, Unidad de Salud.

- Met with the director, followed by a tour of the Unidad with the director. It is a large, new facility.
- Observed an obstetric doctor.
 - At 38 weeks of pregnancy a referral is sent to the hospital, so the information will be there when the woman goes in to deliver.
 - All women see the dentist before delivery and register their babies to start dental care at age 6 months.
- Observed a licenciada nurse who does prenatal and well-child care. We were very impressed with the amount of teaching about nutritional needs of children at various stages of development and other teaching that pertains to the patients.
- Conversation with a young doctor before her lunch. We asked some questions based on our observations.
 - Zinc is used for diarrhea, but also to help absorb vitamins in the diet. This is part of a protocol of the Unidad de Salud.
 - Lecithin is used as an appetite stimulant, also part of a protocol.

