Title of Clerkship: Guatemala Medical Mission Elective
Elective Year: MS4
Department: Medicine
Type of Elective: Clinical ☑ Non-Clinical/Research _____ Basic Science _____
Clerkship Site: San Luca Tolimán, Guatemala
Course Number: GLHL 755
Blocks Available: Variable – interested students must check with the UT Office of Global Health
Number of Students / Block: 10 maximum
Faculty: Richard Paat, M.D., FACP

Elective Description / Requirements:

It is estimated that 20% of Guatemalans lack regular access to health care. Experts attribute poor access to a variety of entrenched social and political causes including insufficient taxation, a high concentration of wealth, and poor implementation of social policies. Forty percent of children have been found to be chronically malnourished, and approximately 30% of pregnant women lack appropriate nutrition. The percentages for malnourishment go up when indigenous Guatemalans, considered to be 40% of the population, are analyzed separately.

Guatemala has made strides in some areas, though there are others where more work is needed. A national vaccination program now provides a series of ten vaccines for 92% of infants throughout the country. Efforts are currently underway to decrease the incidence of Onchocerciasis, Chaga’s Disease, and Malaria, although Guatemala still has more cases of Malaria than any other country in the Americas. HIV/AIDS is a growing problem in the nation with insufficient antiretroviral drugs available and a poor infrastructure in place to distribute those that are.

Dr. Paat’s medical brigade has become an important component of health care delivery in this part of Guatemala. The vast majority of health care professionals are in the major metropolitan areas. Fourth-year student leaders will assist Dr. Paat in mentoring more junior students in serving rural populations by traveling to San Lucas Tolimán to bring care to the people of the villages surrounding the town. The health care providers will act as a ‘first-line diagnosis and treatment team’ and will refer patients / coordinate their travel to the town clinic when necessary. The team will work in conjunction with local health coordinators, thereby maximizing the clinical services to those with the greatest needs. Careful coordination of the team visit will provide care to those not seen by other medical brigades in the area. Students participating in this elective will also work with health coordinators to facilitate follow-up and specialty care for individuals living with diabetes and those with other chronic health care needs. Statistics will be maintained for all patient visits and will be used to direct and improve future brigade visits.

Length of Clerkship: 2 weeks

Links to EPOs:

K12, K13, S9
K3, K9, K10, K12, K13, K14, K15, S2, S8, S10
K5, K12, K13, K14, K15, S7, S8, S10

Educational Course Objectives:

1. Explain the relationship between the degree of economic development in San Lucas Tolimán, Guatemala, and the access to health care for individuals living in that community.
2. Discuss the relative impact of tropical diseases, poor access to health care, and limited public health resources and initiatives on the health status of individuals living in Guatemala.
3. Compare and contrast the available clinical and laboratory facilities in Toledo, Ohio, and San Lucas Tolimán, Guatemala.
4. Discuss the impact of participating in medical care in a developing country on your professional identity and development as a health care provider in the U.S.

Professionalism: The student must adhere to all professionalism standards and policies of the College of Medicine and Life Sciences M.D. Program.

Instructional Methods: Ambulatory care experience, case studies, case write-ups, diagnostic test – use and interpretation, independent study, mentored clinical practice, clinical case presentation, and small group presentation and discussion.

Evaluation Methods: Faculty assessment of case presentation, observation and assessment of clinical skills, review of journal entries/reflective paper, assessment of student presentation of assigned medical topic(s), and assessment of performance as a student team leader.

Prerequisites: The student must be in good academic standing and must have successfully completed all required clerkships. In addition, all policies mandated by the UT Office of Global Health must be followed and all associated requirements completed.

Clerkship Director: Christopher Lynn, M.D.

Clerkship Coordinator: Melissa Hansen
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Special Requirements: The student is required to adhere to the UT Student Global Health Experiences Policy (Policy #3364-81-04-030-02). Please contact the UT Office of Global Health with questions related to this policy.

AAMC Hot Topics Addressed in this Elective Clerkship: (please make selection from attached Hot Topic list)
- Community Health
- Health Care Systems
- Medical Ethics
- Medical Socioeconomics
- Multicultural Medicine
- Patient Health Education
- Population-Based Medicine