

Doctor finds own way to contribute in Peru

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Global Health Initiatives recognizes Madhan Iyengar, MD, for his incredible dedication and desire to bring much-needed equipment and support to Iquitos, Peru. In his own words, he relates how he went from believing he had little to contribute to a GHI trip, to making a world of difference for our sister hospital, Clinica Adventista Ana Stahl. Thank you, Dr. Iyengar!

Gastroenterology, as a field, does not easily lend itself to international medical mission work.

As proceduralists, my colleagues and I have become increasingly reliant on advanced technology to help patients. For this reason, the prevailing sentiment amongst many gastroenterologists is that we do not have a role to play in the advancement of international medical mission work.



When I met with the Global Health Initiatives team about attending a trip to Peru, I, too, anticipated that I would have little to offer. Then they told me that the people of Iquitos, Peru needed physicians to perform endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP). ERCP is a specialized endoscopic technique that is used in medical emergencies to alleviate an obstruction in the common bile duct. They said there were no gastroenterologists in Iquitos, let alone the entire state of Loreto, that were trained to perform this procedure. To make matters more

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challenging, the equipment necessary to perform the procedure was not available. So, even if a physician were capable of performing the procedure, the lack of necessary technology would render the task impossible.

I began considering ways I could help. I contacted the Olympus Corporation to see if they would be willing to donate outdated equipment. Olympus encouraged me to apply for an Olympus Medical Missions Grant. This new grant program helps physicians bring technology to a region of the world where it is not currently available. After speaking with local physicians in Iquitos, I made a list of items that would help them in modernizing their gastroenterology practice. I requested a new monitor, a stand, a new light source, a computer processor, a colonoscope, an endoscope and an ERCP scope.

Within a few weeks, and somewhat to my surprise, Olympus granted my request. Seven large boxes of new equipment showed up at my office ready for transport to Peru.

After arriving in Iquitos, I spent the bulk of my time there learning about the city's current gastroenterology practice and working with local physicians to introduce the new equipment. A nurse in our GI lab at Porter, Kacy Crook, also accompanied me on the trip and played an integral role in educating the GI lab staff in Iquitos about proper cleaning and maintenance of the new equipment. I met Ronald Aguilar, MD, a physician in Lima, Peru who has been working to further this project since my departure. Dr. Aguilar is currently looking into ways to help train the local physicians over time so they can be self-sufficient in performing ERCP.

My experience in Iquitos, Peru was more than I had anticipated. We were able to take the first steps in the long journey of introducing new technology to this region of the world. It was a great example of how physicians, industry and GHI can work together to help those in need.

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COMMENTS (1)

› **Maribel Connolly**

What a great experience to help so many people with this new technology. I'm from Peru. Beautiful people.

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