



Partners Promoting Health, One Community at a Time.

Medical Report, March 2013

My name is Rosanne Lewis, and I have been an obstetrics nurse for 19 years in a small, low-risk hospital in Moab, Utah. In March 2013, I accompanied Haiti Health Initiative (HHI) on a medical humanitarian trip to Timo, Haiti. There, I was responsible for educating midwives. Our goal was to give the people of Timo some of the tools and education they needed to help improve their lives.

Activities in Haiti

While we were in Haiti, we taught classes to midwives about basic normal birth, cutting the cord, active placental management, and general possible complications. We also taught breastfeeding and pregnancy classes for those wanting to see a doctor. Other education we provided was on hook worm, shoes, nutrition, cholera, dental health, and hygiene.

Results

Teaching the midwives about basic normal birth, cutting the cord, active placental management, and general possible complications went very well and all were easily demonstrated. It was also easy to see education deficiencies or the education needs of the midwives. At first, the midwives misunderstood how to cut the cord, but that misunderstanding was easily corrected through the birthing simulator. This had disposable umbilical cords that the midwives could actually cut.

The midwives only tolerated less than two hours of teaching per day. We taught two groups of midwives for two sessions with each session lasting one and a half hours. We only had three hours total with each group, so we had to keep it brief.

Before the trip, money was raised for a birthing simulator. The birthing simulator was perfect for teaching the midwives. The midwives were on the edge of their seats during the education. They were nodding their heads with understanding even before the interpreter had time to translate.

Over 40 midwife kits were given to midwives who needed them. Besides gloves, the kits had other basic delivery supplies and included a light source that is not readily available to the people of Timo so that the midwives would have light during births that take place in areas of low light. The kits were organized in a nice bag for easy access and transport. The midwives were very eager to get these supplies and showed appreciation for our sacrifice to bring them the education and supplies. In all, 30 midwives attended the sessions. The community workers that helped with translation and record-keeping were very professional, thanks to previous training from HHI.

Teaching the breastfeeding and pregnancy classes also went well. All those wanting to see the doctor went through this class as well as four other classes. We had about 50 newborn kits to hand out and about 25 crocheted outfits. These were all given to the pregnant women who attended the classes.

Some of the outfits were given to women with small babies. I could tell that most of the babies had supplies from previous kits. These supplies are being well used.

In the other education classes, those participating were given shoes and hygiene kits once the education in those areas was completed.

Problems and Challenges

The teaching went better than expected, and we feel as though there was not much we could have done differently to improve the outcome. Any minor challenges were handled quickly and efficiently.

Future Solutions and Recommendations

One recommendation we give is to add how to scrub scalps of babies with a soft-bristled brush and how to avoid shaken baby syndrome to the teaching as well as to hand out the soft-bristled brushes.

Personal Reflections

This was my first time going to Haiti. I could not have asked for a better experience. I would recommend it to any obstetrics nurse (or anyone who has the opportunity to go). The experience made me a better person. I feel like I am more focused on what is important in my life, and I learned from the midwives and doctors in Timo. I feel I am more professional and knowledgeable. I feel stronger in many ways. I made many life-long friends, and I also feel very close to the many people in my community who helped me prepare for this trip.