Daniel Zimmermann

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what little they had in the form of these things. Hopefully the world will help Haiti not just rebuild what they had, but help them to achieve something much better. The people that we met during our time in Haiti were remarkable. And I’m sure with the right tools and systems established they could achieve much.

Who provided dental treatment in Haiti before the earthquake struck? Which dental conditions are treated by the dentists there?

Dr Gary Godley: Most dentistry is provided by volunteers from around the world. There are many organisations that provide dentists, hygienists and assistants and other personnel. Although basic restorative dentistry is provided, treatment consists mainly of oral surgery procedures, as well as the treatment of pain and infections.

Are there any dental schools? Where do dentists receive their education?

Dr Gary Godley: This is a question we asked and never received a definite answer. To the best of my knowledge, there is University of Haiti School of Dentistry in Port-Au-Prince associated with a hospital. I understand there are perhaps 15 students enrolled. Does this school exist after the earthquake? I do not know.

Dr Lance Godley: We learned that some Haitians leave and are trained abroad and return to aid their fellow countrymen.

According to the WHO, there are less than 100 dentists for a population of over 9 million. How do people receive treatment at all?

Dr Gary Godley: Of course, many people never receive dental treatment. However, there are many volunteer dentists who return many times during their career to help provide an invaluable service to those they are able to reach. Travel within Haiti can be very difficult for both the dental personnel and patients, which limits care for a vast number of people.

Dental Tribune International, in collaboration with the Latin America Dental Federation and the World Dental Federation, is currently organising a congress to help raise money for rebuilding practices in Haiti. Have you heard of any other initiatives?

Dr Gary Godley: Certainly, there is still much aid being sent to Haiti. The American Dental Association, for example, is collaborating with a number of dental and non-dental non-governmental organisations such as International Medical Relief and Flying Doctors of America that work in Haiti to respond to the disaster with both short-term assistance and long-term recovery plans to help rebuild dental infrastructure there. If you want to donate just go to their website www.adafoundation.org. There, you will also find updates on the disaster-response efforts.

Dr Gary Godley: We had planned a return trip in December 2009, which was cancelled for unknown reasons. Hopefully, the mission will be rescheduled once the current problems are under control. I also volunteer with the East Meets West Foundation (Oakland, California) and make an annual mission trip to Vietnam. This has been my primary objective for several years, but now that I am aware of the great need closer to home, I will certainly avail myself as needed.

Thank you very much for the interview.

(All photos courtesy of Godley Family Dentistry, USA)