

**A Registrar's Experience  
Orthopaedic Outreach, National Referral Hospital  
Honiara, Solomon Islands  
November 2009  
Dr Ponnaren Pak**

I am an orthopaedic registrar in my second year of the training program. I have always had an interest in orthopaedic outreach and thought it would be a good opportunity for me to have first hand experience. I would like to express my gratitude to Orthopaedic Outreach for allowing me the opportunity to attend the National Referral Hospital(NRH) in Honiara. I would also like to thank Stryker for providing financial support for my trip.

The Honiara outreach mission was a fantastic experience. It took place over a period of 10 days from Tuesday 9 November to Thursday 19 November. During our visit I accompanied Dr Stephen Quain and Dr Paul Hitchen. We attended the outpatient clinics, ward rounds and theatre sessions at NRH. We worked with the local orthopaedic team in assessing and treating interesting and at times difficult cases. It was particularly interesting to manage problems such as delayed presentations of fractures, complex acquired and congenital deformities of limbs and the spine, and other general orthopaedic conditions such as tumours and infection. The management of many conditions proved to be difficult without the equipment and resources we take for granted back home. This included the lack of intraoperative fluoroscopy, which impeded our ability to achieve an optimal intraoperative outcome, the absence of appropriate implants and investigative modalities for us to provide a complete workup of patient's conditions. It was a case of improvisation and doing the most with limited facilities available. It was a great learning experience for me to learn how the visiting orthopaedic surgeons and the local orthopaedic team managed with the limited resources.

On the other hand I was also pleasantly surprised to see the introduction of modern orthopaedic techniques such as arthroscopic surgery. The visiting surgeons were particularly helpful in training Dr Patrick Houasia in mastering the new techniques.

I was also personally involved in the teaching of the local orthopaedic surgeons and orthopaedic trainees with a presentation on Tourniquet Use in orthopaedic surgery and tutorials on ACL injuries and reconstructions to compliment the teaching of this technique in theatre. I was also involved in teaching the local trainees on the surgical treatment of common fractures such as distal radius and ankle fractures.

In addition to time at NRH, we also spent an afternoon in Gizo hospital to assist the local doctors in managing orthopaedic conditions in their patients. Some of these cases proved to be quite difficult and these patients had to be referred to NRH for further management.

By the end of my trip I have come away with a rich experience of orthopaedics in a developing country. I have also made new friends and colleagues. It has certainly cemented my desire to be involved in orthopaedic outreach in future and making it a part of my orthopaedic practice in the long term. Once again, I would like to thank Stryker, Orthopaedic Outreach and Dr Stephen Quain for allowing me to have such a fulfilling experience.

PONNAREN PAK

Dr Ponnaren Pak  
Orthopaedic Registrar