The Development of a Tz’utujil Maya Community Informed Reproductive Health Program at the ODIM Clinic of San Pablo and San Juan La Laguna, Guatemala

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### Family Planning/Prenatal Care Tools

**Objective**: Evaluate and improve reproductive health clinical services through the development of a family planning consultation assessment tool along with providing training and revising the prenatal care system.

**Timeline**:

- **Pre-departure**: Development of family planning assessment tool
- **In-country**: Revision and development of new prenatal care system/documentation.
- **Conducted prenatal consultations with training and education of traditional midwives.**
- **Number of prenatal care consultations and concurrent training sessions conducted**: 24

**Preliminary Results**:

- Co-assessment and management of complicated medical cases
- Co-assessment and management of new/routine prenatal consultations
- Cross-cultural exchange of healthcare techniques and knowledge
- Implementation of new prenatal care system based on WHO recommendations for pregnancy-related care
- Implementation of new patient record form

**Future**:

- Continued prenatal services with newly implemented prenatal care system
- Development of a prenatal care guidelines manual
- Consideration of implementing a Centering Pregnancy program based on the successful health promoter system utilized by the Clinica Sanjuanerita
- Utilization of developed family planning assessment tool in consultations

### Project Background

**Goal**: Our goal is to determine barriers to access of reproductive health care in two Tz’utujil communities: San Juan and San Pablo La Laguna, in the Western Highlands of Guatemala.

**Population**: Rural Mayan women and families in the Western Highlands of Guatemala. Specifically targeted 2 communities: San Juan and San Pablo La Laguna

**Approach**:

- Interdisciplinary team collaboratively conducted 4 different core activities simultaneously to determine the barriers of reproductive health care through the perspective of women, men, and adolescents as well as clinical employees of the community. Furthermore, we trained community health workers on vital reproductive health knowledge to ultimately break the barriers of reproductive health through increased knowledge and access.

**Project Partners**: The Organization for the Development of the Indigenous Maya (ODIM) comprised of local staff, Community Health Promoters (CHPs), and international volunteers who work together to improve, through processes of consciousness raising and prevention, the health and education of the Tz’utujil Maya people in the communities of San Juan and San Pablo La Laguna, Guatemala.

### Curriculum Trainings

**Objective**: To develop curriculum material and produce lesson plans on a wide variety of women’s health related topics in order to develop a women’s health care initiative program via education of health care promoters in the clinic.

**Timeline**:

- **In-country**:
  - Health promoters brainstormed women’s health topics they considered necessary and important for patient education
  - Developed lesson plans for nine topics, including reproductive health, female anatomy, menstrual cycle, trimesters of pregnancy, ovarian cysts, PCOS, family planning methods, STIs, female cancers and more
  - Implemented a class or two per week, totaling nine class sessions

**Preliminary results**:

- From fifteen to thirty health promoters attended each class
- Health promoters found the training method of education to be extremely effective
- Health promoters also demonstrated interest and initiative in future implementation of a women’s health program as a service for the clinic

**Future**:

- Women’s health care program will be implemented via the lesson plans created by the CHP group
- Selection of health promoters designated to women’s health program
- Integration of health promoters as educators and leaders in the community on healthy behavior, lifestyle changes and prevention of disease

### Focus Groups

**Objective**: Identify barriers women face in obtaining women’s health services, specifically family planning, and make recommendations to ODIM to address these barriers.

**Timeline**:

- **Pre-departure (May-June)**: Created Focus group and interview guides

**In-country**:

- Went through the steps of conducting the focus group, demonstrated a focus group, and had the health promoters practice the focus groups
- Nine focus groups were conducted
- Training of transcription/translation with the health promoters
- All focus groups were transcribed/translated into Spanish
- All focus groups were translated into English

**Preliminary Results**:

- Funds in obtaining an ambulance, prescription medicine, surgeries and tests
- Travel partners are essential when transporting someone to a national hospital
- Depo Provera was mentioned as the most common contraceptive method
- Fearful of using certain family planning methods, such as IUDs and Jadelle
- Lack of equipment available for prenatal care – specifically an ultrasound
- Women breastfeed their children for up to two years
- Most women preferred to have their children in their homes with a midwife

**Future/Expected Outcomes**:

- Qualitative analysis of the focus groups and in-depth interviews using MaxQDA
- Create a summary of recommendations for the clinic based off the analysis
- Create a fund for patients in need of emergency transportation in the community
- Create a program for women in the community to learn about family planning options, reproductive health problems, and where they can obtain services

### In-Depth Interviews

**Objective**: Determine the perceived barriers in access to reproductive health care according to clinic staff and local health professionals to develop an informed reproductive health program.

**Timeline**:

- **Pre-departure**: Creation of interview guides

**In-country**:

1. Translation of interview guides into Spanish
2. Modification of guides for specific health professionals
3. Performance of 12 in-depth interviews
4. Development of interview supplement
5. Transcription of recorded interviews
6. Translation of interviews into English

**Preliminary Results**:

- Health professionals emphasized the importance of the following when creating a reproductive health program:
  - Adolescents’ need for a sexual education program
  - Addressing the influence of literacy level on informed participation
  - Maintaining personal privacy about health decisions
  - Male participation
  - Convenience of family planning methods

**Future/Expected Outcomes**:

- Qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews
- Summary of recommendations for Clinica Sanjuanerita
- Creation of an adolescent sexual education program
- Creation of a women’s health program at the clinic

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