

## **First Haitian American Urology Conference: A Historic Collaboration**

While endoscopy has become the mainstay of much of urological practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in Haiti open surgical techniques dominate due to lack of equipment and inadequate electrical supply. Urologic residency training is hampered by these and other factors. For these reasons, Haitian urology remains challenged.

For more than 20 years, several American urologists have independently provided direct patient care in Haiti or conducted educational seminars to share their expertise with fellow Haitian colleagues. Unfortunately, the activities have not been well coordinated and thus have failed to achieve all the possible impact they could have.

Prior to his first trip to Haiti, Dr. Michael Ziegelbaum, a urologist from Long Island, NY asked the AUA and International Volunteers in Urology (IVUmed) to support work that he, as part of a multi-specialty group of physicians and nurses organized by the Association of Haitian physicians Abroad (AMHE), was about to carry out in Cap Haitien, Haiti. Emails sent post mission gained the attention of IVUmed and other urologists who had been to Haiti and resulted in an e-conversation, which culminated in a formal meeting at the 2013 AUA annual meeting in San Diego.

Multiple issues were raised by those in attendance as well as those who joined by phone. Haitians, Haitian –Americans as well as others who were simply interested in raising the level of urologic care in Haiti laid the groundwork for a joint conference in Haiti. The AMHE and the Haitian Society of Urology made local arrangements.

On November 15, 2013 at the Hotel Oasis International in Petion-Ville, Haiti the first Joint Haitian American Urology Conference was convened.

American participants included Samuel Broaddus MD, Raymond Paul-Blanc, MD, Derrick Black, Frank Burks MD, Lars Ellison MD, Angelo Gousse, MD, Henri P Lanctin MD, Curtis Peterson MD, Daniel Rosenstein MD, Fran Schneck MD, Josh Wood, and Michael Ziegelbaum MD.

The Haitian group included Drs. Pierre Boncy, Bernard Brutus, Mitelot Clervil, Jory Desir, Youri Dreux, Jean Geto Dube, Jacques Jeudy, Pierre-Alix Nazon, Claude Paultre, Myril Sahmonde and Guy Theodore. The AMHE was represented by its President Maxime Coles MD, the program co-director, Louis Auguste MD and Jean Michel Loubeau MD.

The morning session focused on the status of urology in Haiti. The history of urology in Haiti, the 26 currently active Haitian urologists and the 7 sites where urologic services are available were reviewed by Drs. Boncy and Paultre. Dr. Nazon reviewed the caseload of urologic surgery at a single center over a three-year period. Most cases were open surgeries with only 36 TURP's done. Due to lack of screening, definitive treatment for localized prostate cancer is negligible.

Drs. Desir and Dreux reviewed the obstacles to urological residency training. There are limited numbers of advanced urology cases, lack of active participation by trainees, lack of standardization of the training curriculum and absence of a credible process for board certification.

Dr. Dube, who is both a urologist and chief hospital administrator, described the multiple challenging problems faced by practicing urologists in Haiti. He noted issues with the leadership of the Haitian Society of Urology. Lack of cooperation amongst urologists has prevented the acquisition of high cost items; this has impacted the ability to provide state of the art urologic care. There are few opportunities for continuing education. Maintenance and proper care of instruments and equipment in the government-run hospitals is lacking.

During the afternoon presentations, Americans who have been active in Haiti spoke of their experiences as well as their vision for future cooperation. Dr. Broaddus opened with a presentation of activities of Konbit Sante in Cap Haitien over the past 14 years. These included improvement of Justinien Hospital's physical plant, engineering support, and additional training of two Haitian urologists at the Maine Medical Center.

Dr. Lanctin detailed the accomplishment of the Haiti Project which has been active at Hospital Bienfaisance in Pignon. Courses in urethral reconstruction and vesico-vaginal fistula repair were given. Dr. Ziegelbaum followed with his vision for the future of Haitian urology and the mutual benefits that could be derived for both Haitian urologists and their American counterparts. He stressed the need for tele-conferencing, tele-pathology and tele-radiology.

Dr. Schneck described a portable electronic health record (EHR) with storage capacity in the "cloud" that is being developed with support from IVUmed. This would obviate the need for physical, often inadequate, charting in the underdeveloped world. Josh Wood of IVUmed presented the [www.urohaiti.org](http://www.urohaiti.org) web site, currently under development. Upcoming seminars will be posted, allowing Haitian colleagues to participate. It would also post volunteer opportunities in Haiti for interested Americans.

By consensus, it was decided that the next step is for the Haitian Society of Urology to define its needs so that a coordinated effort by IVUmed, the AUA and SIU can be undertaken. It was agreed that the role of the Americans is to assist their Haitian colleagues to attain their stated goals. Haitian medical care and its delivery need to be tailored to the needs of its people and their medical providers, with particular sensitivity to the unique socioeconomic and political realities in Haiti.

At the end of the conference, a joint decision was made to have a follow-up conference in Haiti in one year in conjunction with the AMHE multi-specialty mission to Justinien Hospital in Cap Haitien. An interim meeting will be convened in Orlando at the upcoming AUA meeting in May 2014. A committee was formed to continue this discussion in the interim. It will be headed by Angelo Gousse and will include Pierre

Boncy, Samuel Broaddus, Frank Burks, Jean Geto Dube, Henri Lanctin, Claude Paultre, Francis Schneck and Michael Ziegelbaum with the support of Josh Wood of IVUmed and Ellen Molino of the AUA.

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