

REPORT
GYNECOLOGIC SURGERY MISSION TRIP
October 20-28, 2017
Tiquipaya, Bolivia



Missioner Dr. Janet Tomezsko, center, and Bolivian O.R. staff prepare for surgery during the 2017 Gynecologic Surgery Mission Trip at Tiquipaya Hospital.

I. INTRODUCTION

The 2017 Gynecologic Surgery Mission Trip was hosted by the Municipal Maternity and Children's Hospital of Tiquipaya, with hospital planning and preparations headed by Tiquipaya partner Dr. José Luis Choque. The mission team included two Chicago-area surgeons: Dr. Janet Tomezsko, specialist in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery (urogynecologist), and Dr. Carrie Giordano, gynecologist, accompanied by registered nurses Hilda Barba and Donna Romano. The staff of Solidarity Bridge's local counterpart, Puente de Solidaridad, managed local planning and coordination. Bolivian medical professionals and volunteers also filled various support positions for the mission.

II. GOALS

- To **provide specialized surgeries** to improve quality of life for women who lack access to treatment due to financial constraints and limited available treatment options.
- To **advance training** in mid-urethral bladder sling surgery to treat stress incontinence, endometrial ablation to treat heavy bleeding, and other gynecological and pelvic reconstruction procedures.
- To continue to assess local needs and explore partnership opportunities for Solidarity Bridge Gynecologic Surgery Program activities.

III. SUMMARY of PATIENTS SERVED

- Over **30 women were evaluated** for conditions including urinary incontinence, abnormal bleeding, uterine and vaginal prolapse, cysts, fibroids, and other conditions.
- Surgical treatment was provided for **17 women** ranging in age from 26 to 74.
- **Five women** underwent **mid-urethral sling surgery** to treat urinary stress incontinence.
- **Four women** underwent **hysterectomies**, most often to address issues related to uterine fibroids.
- **Four women** underwent **pelvic repairs for severe uterine prolapse**.
- **Two endometrial ablations** were performed to treat cases of abnormal bleeding.
- **One ooforectomy** was performed to remove a large ovarian cyst.
- The team assisted an especially delicate surgery to remove a massive encapsulated **ovarian cyst**.
- Dr. Giordano also assisted on three emergency cesarean sections.
- Surgery was not the best treatment option for the other patients, who were prescribed or referred for appropriate medical care. Some patients also received counseling and instruction by nurse-therapist Donna Romano on exercises and other non-surgical techniques to manage and treat urge incontinency.

IV. PATIENT STORY

Jesusa, 71, lives with her daughter, Lourdes, who works on a mushroom farm. Lourdes's \$115 dollar monthly paycheck is spent on food for the family, so Jesusa takes on sewing jobs to pay the utility bills and her grandchildren's school fees. There is nothing left for anything else, so for years Jesusa quietly endured the discomfort caused by severe pelvic organ prolapse with urinary incontinence. She was embarrassed by her frequent need to change her undergarments, so Jesusa no longer left the house. She tried to make the best of it, convinced that, in her words: "When we're old we have to put up with things and conform ourselves with what we have."

When Jesusa heard about the surgery campaign at the Tiquipaya Hospital, she was filled with hope that her life could be different. "If you can help me, I will truly be eternally grateful."

Thanks to pelvic repair surgery, Jesusa has recovered not only her health, but also her freedom and dignity.



V. MISSION TEAM, SUPPORT STAFFS, HOSPITAL PARTNERS & other collaborators

Mission Team:

Dr. Carrie Giordano, Gynecologist
Dr. Janet Tomezsko, Urogynecologist
RN Donna Romano
RN Hilda Barba
Jodi Grahl, Trip Leader
Lindsay Doucette, Chaplain

Puente de Solidaridad, responsible for local planning and logistics:

Patricia Vargas, Executive Director
María Inés Uriona, Medical Programs Coordinator
Marizol Mamani, Social Worker, Responsible for on-site mission coordination
José Choque, Medical Supplies Coordinator
Marcela Canedo, Public Relations
Alfonso Flores, Logistics
Pablo Galindo, Research and Data Manager
Verónica Castellón, Administrative Assistant
Maria Eugenia Rojas, PdS Board Member, Chaplain
Fr. Dae Kim, Chaplain
Nicole Sanchez Iriarte and Francisco Lazaro, volunteer interpreters
Patricia Bautista and Franz Lopez, social work volunteers

Tiquipaya Hospital Medical Staff

Dr. Villavicencio, Hospital Director
Dr. José Luis Choque, Gynecologist
Dr. Sandro Zambrana, Gynecologist
Dr. Monica Arévalo Lopez, Anesthesiologist
Dr. Favi Ferrel Perez, Anesthesiologist

Visiting doctors from Oncological Hospital of Sucre:

Dr. Carla Tatiana Mina Villarroel, Gynecological Oncologist
Dr. Zulema Yampa, 5th-year Resident in Gynecology

*Thank you to our mission team,
everyone at Tiquipaya Hospital,
Puente de Solidaridad staff,
board and volunteers, and our
generous in-kind and financial
donors who made this mission
trip possible!*

