

Medical Service Offered in a Cambodia

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Kratie, Cambodia - Thirty people traveled from Phnom Penh to Kratie Province on Oct. 31, 2014 to offer free medical care in the Kratie province in northeastern Cambodia.

Since November 2010, UPF-Cambodia has been offering free medical service for poor and sick people in Kratie province located in Northeast of Cambodia. The uniqueness of this project lay in the cooperation between Korean and Japanese doctors and nurses with Cambodian doctors and medical students.

The Korean team included 1 dentist, 1 surgeon, 1 radiologist, 2 nurses, 1 PR and administration from the Aewon Foundation and Cheongshim International Hospital.

The Japanese team included 1 internal medicine specialist, 4 nurses, 1 dental assistant, accountant and PR from CAMP.

The Cambodian team included 2 intern doctors and 11 medical students from the International University in Phnom Penh.

They were accompanied by four staff member of UPF-Cambodia served as organizer, translator, and general affairs.

Where the team visited this year was not the Referral Hospital as before but the small island of Koh Chreng, which has 3,000 residents. There is no bridge to cross to the island, so team member crossed the Mekong River on a makeshift boat with an old Chinese engine, together with medical supplies and some motor bikes. The Japanese team brought life jackets in case of accident due to rain. However, they were not needed.

Until one day before, there were showers every day in Phnom Penh, but in Kratie the sky was so clear and the river was calm. The project was blessed from the beginning.

The medical care consisted of six various activities:

Medical consultation by Dr. Koide, Dr. Uh and three Cambodian intern doctors

Teeth treatment by Dr. Kim and 2 Cambodian assistants

Health education for patients, including teaching children to wash hands

Medical lecture and practice for medical students by Dr. Koide. For example, students practiced how to find a pulse in various places of the body through the stethoscope and got new information about the diseases.

Inquiry about diseases, financial situations, and life habits of 120 patients who volunteered to participate in a survey.

Donation of medicines and medical supplies to the Referral Hospital in Kratie city.

To our surprise, there are more than 30 people who suffer from thyroxin (thyroid deficiency), which means more than one percent of island's population has this disease. The reason why is that villagers do not eat seaweed and good salt which contains iodine. Especially poor people try to eat only products from their own farm, such as vegetables and meat.

Also women suffer often during pregnancy and after giving birth. They do not visit doctors or the health center in Kratie unless they have an urgent problem because it is not convenient for pregnant women to cross the river on the simple boats available. Also it is quite far from villages to the landing place if they have to walk. Their transportation is either by ox cart or motor bike, which are not comfortable means of transportation for pregnant women.

There are no suitable streets for cars but only footpaths between corn fields. In order to solve this problem, the Korean team is trying to fundraise to build a health center and arrange for one nurse to work on Koh Chreng Island.

On the evening of November 1, H.E. Sar Chamrong, the governor of Kratie Province, and his staff visited the hotel where the team stayed to express his gratitude to the contribution with love and sacrifice to Kratie people. He brought bouquets to give to doctors and silk purses for the other staff.

At the end, three doctors and some staff members visited the Referral Hospital where the medical team has been serving once a year since 2010. Centering on Dr. Hang, director of Referral Hospital, around 50 staffs gathered in one room to share their opinion, question and request. Some doctors and staffs wish to study either in Japan or Korea to improve their knowledge and skill.

Dr. Koide mentioned the importance of health education for people rather just treatment. Vice director told the difficulty to educate people. At the end of meeting, medicines and devices were donated to the hospital.