

Having never gone on a mission trip to a foreign country, medical or otherwise, and not even speaking passable Spanish, I'll admit I had no idea what I was doing. Luckily, we were able to dig up an old email from a few years ago that mentioned the "spot y availability of toilet paper" and "near medical necessity of Ciprofloxacin," for without that sage advice, Jake and I would have been even more wildly unprepared than we already were. He and I decided to set out on a trip to Nicaragua with not even vague goals in mind, but with a desire to help however possible.

We were picked up from the airport by Kevin and Kevin (it's a popular name down there) blasting nothing but Guns N Roses in the car past mule powered taxis to our first clinic day on a Sunday afternoon. Dr. Corea, well known as Pablo here in Milwaukee from his time as a resident visitor and then as

resident. With our help, we would be instructing the residents and attendings at this hospital (and at other surrounding hospitals) surgeries that we had become accustomed to such as total hip and knee replacements and shoulder arthroscopy for which they were still not as experienced.

In the days that followed, I could not believe how much I learned. From the 101 ways to use a Cobb elevator, to how to use a simple towel clip to solve problems, to different ways to suture wounds, to bending and fitting plates. They



The next day, Dr. Tony LoGiudice and I arrived back at Velez Paiz to perform our first day of surgery. There were multiple patients lined up to have shoulder arthroscopy for biceps tendonitis, rotator cuff tears, and instability. This hospital was provided funding by the government and acquired 2 state of the art arthroscopy towers for Nicaragua. It was Dr. Correa's vision to develop the shoulder arthroscopy program at this hospital and Dr. LoGiudice and myself were the first to perform shoulder arthroscopy of any kind at this hospital. Residents and attendings were all present and we made a point to pass on our knowledge of arthroscopy. We also finished that day by performing a Latarjet procedure which had an even larger audience and we found ourselves having to get creative while piecing together instruments to safely complete the procedure.

The remainder of the week John and I split time between Velez Paiz and Hospital Lenin Fonseca performing either shoulder arthroscopy or hip and knee arthroplasty with the joint surgeons in each respective hospital. Dr. Nelsen Freund was very gracious with his desire to pass his joint knowledge along to their attendings and residents.

This experience opened my eyes to the practice of medicine and disparities that exist between the United States and Nicaragua. It really allowed me to reflect on our health care system and realize that what we take for granted would be life altering for their country and patients. This trip was an invaluable experience that I will remember throughout my life and career.

