Providing Hope, Health and Healing to the People of Haiti.

CLINIQUE SAINT ESPRIT/HAITI MEDICAL MISSIONS OF MEMPHIS

Dental Clinic Report

December 2014
Overview of Oral health in Haiti

According to the 1999 national oral health survey, the dentist population ratio was 0.12 for 10,000 inhabitants versus 2.54 per 10,000 in the Dominican Republic, its neighbor, and Decayed/Missing/Filled Teeth (DMFT) at age 12 was 0.7\(^3\) with extractions for the most common dental treatment. Most Dentist in Haiti practice privately. Dental care is available to a small minority of Haitians because most dentists in Haiti practice privately and largely concentrated in the capital and so provide dental care to less than 1% of the population. With a GDP of 1,300 $ US in 2013, despite the percentage of people living in an extreme poverty has dropped from 31% to 20% at the national level, Haiti remains the most impoverished country in America and one of the poorest in the world. The Ministry of health provides limited general and dental care to the population. Dental services can be described as ‘reactive dental care’ because all services provided are in response to a painful dental condition that must be relieved rapidly, available to a small minority of Haitians.

Clinic St Esprit/Haiti Medical Missions of Memphis overview services to support the Haitian health system

After going on health missions trip in Haiti for many years, the organization, “Haiti Medical Missions of Memphis” had decided to build a permanent clinic in order to help the citizen of Haiti and had called it Clinic St Esprit (Holy Spirit clinic). located just outside the outskirt of Port au prince, the country’s capital. Quality health care are provided through its primary health care and rehabilitation center. General consultation, prenatal care, eye clinic, cataract surgery, rehabilitation therapy for children and adult, Dental care are some among other services available for the population. With hundreds of patients trying to get in daily, the clinic becomes the busiest clinic in Croix des Bouquets.
**Dental clinic**

*Improved oral health requires better preventive oral health care and significantly increased access to that care,* by opening the dental clinic staffed with only licensed highly qualified professionals, it is the contribution of the organization to help the citizen of Haiti to have a free and good quality dental care access. As for the other services provided by Clinique Saint Esprit, dental care is highly requested, most of the time it is with heartbreaking to let dental patients outside the gate due to our limited capacity to respond to the alarming demands.

**Community Outreach clinics**

We had quickly understood how vital it was to educate people in the community on dental care. At the beginning of the year 2013 we had started community outreach clinics in order to reach more people added to thousands we see annually at the clinic. From community schools to tent villages we had installed our educational material supports to learn schoolboys, schoolgirls and adults on good habits to keep their teeth healthy in order to prevent the Crazy number of teeth extractions we have to deal in the dental clinic. On a day of January, 2013, we had made our first experience, people in the community of Dessources had got a chance to have such a unique program. Unique not because it was their ever first kind of program but only it was the first time they were referred to a permanent clinic for follow-up care after a field clinic. That day we had reached more than 450 people in total. General consultation, dental care and pharmacy were the services we provided at that community outreach program.
We will never forget that day of January 26th, 2014, when visiting a community school in a distance of 5 minutes ride from our clinic, two pediatric-dentists had discovered more than 20% of the children seen that day aged between 7 to 10 already had teeth decay. Since then, we had given ourselves this obligation to continue with these dental community outreach programs. These programs are involve 4 steps.

- The first one is the education side where we show the reasons and how to have healthy teeth.

- Distribution of toothbrushes and toothpaste

- The third part is consultation on site, people are seen to determine whether their teeth are sick or not.

- And then, follow-up for the sick ones in our dental clinic

The first outreach clinic for the year 2014 had taken place at the community primary school of Beudet, there, we had educate and see more than 300 children from 7 to 10. We then had proceed to a brush distribution to the children so to limit the use of one brush to several persons at home.

Right after we had coordinate with the community school’s principal to send the sick ones along with parents for treatment at our dental clinic.

Our journey did not finished, on September of this year, we had offered our educational dental service and on site consultation to an other tent village located at Lilavois 11, where lives three hundred families.
Less than two hundred had attended our dental education and the same number had dental consultation. Again, the sick ones were referred to our permanent dental clinic for treatment. With a plastic reclining chair used as dental chair, the dentists had checked on teeth of that impoverished population living in that village. It was a school day and the number of children who did not go to school was heartbreaking; it means that the situation of these children would be worsen when grown-up. With no education, no chance to have a bright future. Reddish hair looking, sign of a poor nutrition, these kids were also looking for food and clothes.

“We are here to help you having healthy teeth I remember we had said to them”. And after that the presentation had started as shown in the fig # 3.

Some of the kids waiting to have a brush under a hot sun

Reclining chair used as dental chair at the tent village.

Fig # 3. Time for the first presentation
Our last community outreach program was taken place at the neighboring school of **St. Charles Boromee** run by the Dominican sisters of the Presentation. There, we had educate more than five hundred (500) schoolboys and Schoolgirls, and we proceeded afterwards to distribution of toothpaste and toothbrushes to all of them at the school. On the school playground joy were reflecting on the schoolboys and schoolgirls cheeks after receiving the brushes and toothpaste. Some of them had even waved their toothbrushes and toothpaste in the air as described in the third picture.
**In the Dental Clinic**

Due to numerous community outreach programs, the number of patients was increased for this year. Patients recorded at the dental clinic last year was five thousand and thirty two (5,332) that number is increased to six thousand five hundred and sixty eight (6,568) for this year. Education, prevention and treatment are our responses to come in help with the population. We do dental education and prevention on Wednesday, patients are asked to attend the class in order to learn on ways to have better healthy teeth so to decrease “reactive dental care”

This year the number of extraction is drastically changed thanks to prevention classes we do every Wednesday at the clinic for the dental patients, and also the community outreach programs. The results are promising. In 2013, 41.26% out of our patients had come for pulling teeth out against 32% in 2014. The following graph show two different situation from 2013 to 2014.

![Dentist at work in the dental clinic](image)

2013 census, extractions scored 41.26 %

2014 census shows the drop of extractions to 32 %
**Our success, a guide to others**

“Wow do you have a beautiful compound and clinic….and so very clean and maintained. I was so impressed” had wrote Dr. Tim Brown after paying a visit to the clinic. Wanted to understand and learn how to establish permanent clinic in Haiti, Dr. Tim and his team had traveled a distance of 115 kilometers to get to us, they were impressed by the quality of services we provide to patients for free. We are also a fieldwork training center for an Italian university partner where Italians dentists students come. Our *savoir-faire* are shared to not only Italian graduated dentists but also to Haitian dental graduate, in *social service* (year back given by any medical and dental professionals trained in Haiti to the population through selected health centers all around the country).

---

Dr. Tim Brown and a Haitian dental student

Part of Dr. Tim’s team inside the dental clinic
Dental related Photo Gallery

Dentist working in a tent village

Toothpaste and toothbrushes distribution.

Dentist doing triage.

Presentation in a school.

Toothpaste for distribution.

Italian dentist Watches senior dentist at work in the clinic

Written by: David Alexis for Clinique Saint Esprit/HMMoM

Providing Hope, Health and Healing to the People of Haiti.