A life-changing experience

If you like adventure, volunteering with Dental Project Peru gives you the chance to explore the world while using your talents to make a difference. Roisin Tohill explains

In August 2006, I spent two weeks with Dental Project Peru (DPP) in the Apurimac Mountains. I never predicted what a life-changing experience it would be for me and I can’t wait to go back.

We saw an amazing part of the country that few tourists have ever seen. This small charity is making a huge difference in an area where there is little other dental care. It is truly lifesaving work, and extremely rewarding. Some patients who have endured years of pain will walk for hours or even days to get treatment.

Rampant decay
The Apurimac is one of the poorest areas of Peru. Some villages had no electricity or running water, yet they had Coca Cola! The introduction of a Westernised diet with no dental education has led to rampant decay which went largely untreated until DPP started a few years ago.

Much of the treatment was extractions, although we did manage to save quite a few teeth. Each year as the charity returns, the number of extractions decreases and fillings increase – a tribute to the sustainable improvement in dental health and awareness.

The trip was rewarding and fun although not always easy. As long as you are prepared to rough it abit and you have a sense of humour you will survive. We had comfy beds most nights and even found some toilets and cold showers.

Each day started with a fun interactive dental education talk. The children were screened and those requiring treatment were seen straightaway – quite a challenge if a couple of hundred turned up at once! The adults were then treated. Having only limited Spanish, I certainly got to practice my non-verbal communication skills.

Making a difference
Sometimes we had free time to play with the children and get a glimpse into the fascinating way of life. They were a kind and simple people and it was a privilege to know you were making such a difference to their lives.

Peru is a fascinating country and the trips include sightseeing around Cusco and the Sacred Valley of the Incas. The scenery is spectacular and it is a country immersed in culture and history.

Preventative care
The charity is planning to expand in 2009, requiring dentists, nurses, hygienists and therapists. DPP will now provide much more preventive care, including fluoride application, toothpaste provision and dental education.

The Clearstep System

The Clearstep System is a fully comprehensive, invisible orthodontic system, able to treat patients as young as 7.

Based around 5 key elements, including expansion, space closure/creation, alignment, final detailing and extra treatment options such as function jaw correction, The Clearstep System is designed to treat any malocclusion efficiently and invisibly, no matter how severe.

GDP friendly, with our specialist orthodontic faculty providing full diagnostic input and treatment planning, no orthodontic experience is necessary. As your complete orthodontic toolbox, Clearstep empowers the General Practitioner to step into the world of orthodontics and benefit not only their patients, but their practice too.

Accreditation Seminar
This accreditation seminar is aimed at General Practitioners, providing you with all the knowledge and skills required to begin using The Clearstep System right away.

Introductory Course dates for 2009
14th July London
8th October London

Personal Accreditation
Receive a visit from a Clearstep Account Manager, providing a personal accreditation in your practice at a time convenient to you.

Further Courses
Once accredited, further your orthodontic expertise with our hands on course, where you will learn sectional fixed skills and other methods to reduce your costs and treatment times.

Clearstep Advanced Techniques
Hands On Course dates for 2009
29th June - 1st July London
1st - 3rd December London

To find out what Clearstep can do for you contact us today.
01342 337910
info@clearstep.co.uk
www.clearstep.co.uk

The trips run between July and October.

About the author

Roisin Tohill qualified in Dentistry from Queen’s University, Belfast in 2003 and I am presently a final year Orthodontic Specialist Registrar in Edinburgh. I was in Peru in August to October 2006 and I am returning October to December 2009.