management of head injury patients will reduce the incidence of
head injuries and improve mortality in South East Nigeria.

Funding: None.

Abstract #: 2.045_NEPI

Needs assessment in a rural haitian community: Assessing
the socioeconomic and cultural determinants of health

N. Othman, E. Ulrich, S. Keene, M. Smith, C. Chuang; Wayne State
University School of Medicine

Background: International healthcare initiatives must evolve from
individual programs that target single diseases to systems of care that
address the needs of the whole person. Since 2001, the World
Health Student Organization (WHSO) at Wayne State University
School of Medicine has sent medical students and physicians to
Central and South America on medical relief trips. WHSO annually
sends three teams to Morne, L’Hopital, Haiti to provide sustainable
healthcare and facilitate continuity of care. A needs assessment was
developed to evaluate the community’s healthcare needs.

Methods: Needs assessments may be structured as focus groups,
traditional surveys, or both. Questions generally diverge into three
categories: demographics, healthcare access, and healthcare delivery.
Considering the short-term nature of our relief trips, a 15 minute
assessment was developed that focused on the above three themes.
Participants were chosen randomly from a triage waiting area, con-
sented, and then completed the survey via Creole interpreters. 34
surveys were completed by men and women age 18 and older.
This study was approved by the Haitian Ethics Committee and
the Wayne State University Institutional Review Board.

Findings: Results include age, marital status, years of education,
household size, number of children, availability of running water and
electricity, occupation, income, perceived health problems, methods
of accessing their healthcare systems, and barriers to obtaining needed
care. The most common perceived problems were gastrointestinal
disease, headache, fever, abdominal pain, and anemia. Respondents
thought a nearby clinic, clean water, more medications, more money,
and electricity would be most beneficial for their health. Barriers to
healthcare access included lack of monetary funds and long travel times.

Interpretation: International relief work struggles to provide effi-
cacious care to lower-and-middle income countries, which may be
due to a lack of understanding of cultural and socioeconomic factors
that affect healthcare delivery. The needs assessment is the first step
to identifying these key factors, in an effort to ultimately deliver
community requested healthcare in a culturally competent manner.
WHSO aims to avoid “creating a problem then prescribing a solu-
tion”, and instead partner with the community and Haitian organi-
zations to provide healthcare the community values.

Funding: None.

Abstract #: 2.046_NEPI

Barriers to contraceptive use among adolescents in Nicaragua

J.J. Parker1, Cindy Veldhuis2, Sadia Haider1; 1Department of Obstetrics
& Gynecology, Center for Global Health, 2University of Illinois at
Chicago, Center for Global Health

Background: Nicaragua has the highest rate of adolescent preg-
nancies in the Western Hemisphere and contraceptive use among
adolescents is low. Low contraceptive use tends to relate to attitudes
towards contraception rather than lack of access.

Methods: We conducted a convenience sample of adolescents (15-
19 year olds) who were living in or attending school in two neigh-
boring semirural communities in Nicaragua. The main areas of focus
of the written survey were sexual activity, contraceptive use, and atti-
itudes toward contraception.

Findings: The response rate to the survey was 52.2% (N = 291).
43.3% of survey respondents reported previous sexual intercourse.
Of respondents reporting sexual intercourse, only 23.2% reported
always using contraceptives. Females were more likely to report
never or rarely using contraceptives (46.5% vs. 21.4% of males, 
p < .001). Only 6.7% of non-users reported lacking money to buy
contraception, and only 7.8% reported infrequent contraception
availability at clinics. In contrast to the low rates of contraceptive
use, 84% of males and 74% of females responded they are “not inter-
ested in having a child at this moment” and 90% of respondents re-
ported that using contraception is “very important.” Reasons for
non-use varied considerably by gender. Male non-users frequently
reported that female partners did not want to use contraception
(40.0%). Female non-users reported fear that their parents would
know they were sexually active (47.1%) or that pregnancy was
“God’s decision” (41.2%). Another frequently reported reason was
fear that contraceptives would cause permanent infertility (32.4%
of females vs. 23.6% of males). 89.3% of non-users cited at least
one social or educational barrier to contraceptive use, whereas only
30.7% reported a physical access barrier (p <.001)

Interpretation: Low rates of contraceptive use in semi-rural
Nicaragua are primarily related to social and educational barriers
and not a lack of physical access.

Male and female respondents report substantially different reasons
for non-use, suggesting large gaps in partner communication. High
levels of interest in avoiding pregnancy suggest that a targeted inter-
vention could overcome the identified social and educational barriers
and increase contraceptive use among adolescents.

Funding: None.

Abstract #: 2.047_NEPI

Examining depression and quality of life in patients with
Thalassemia in Sri Lanka

P. Beamish1, P. Patel1, T. da Silva2, D. Kaushalya1, A. Premawardhena1, S. Williams1, A. Ravindran2; 1University of
Toronto, Toronto, ON and Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya,
Sri Lanka, 2University of Toronto, Toronto, ON, 3Faculty of Medicine,
University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

Background: With the decline in mortality rates in thalassemia
due to improved treatment strategies, research has begun to focus
on psychological morbidities and quality of life among patients.
Similar to other childhood chronic diseases, psychosocial health
and daily functioning are affected by the comorbidities of the disease
and its treatment. While there is published research in this area from
other countries, there is little information specific to the patient