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Trip Report
Frynee Davila, MD
Leon, Nicaragua
Rosales Hospital

Nicaragua is a developing country with many economic limitations. A country that for many years has counted on the support of a group known as Cooperación Ortopédica Americano-Nicaragüense, or COAN, in a variety of areas of medicine but especially in Orthopaedics and Traumatology. In 2005, COAN introduced the SIGN system, a special method of osteosynthesis for fractures of long bones. The SIGN system has allowed Rosales Hospital to get patients out of traction and to send them home to live productive lives. The problem with most effective orthopaedic treatment here in Nicaragua is that the patients can't afford it. In this case however, when we effectively report our results, SIGN graciously provides the instruments and implants to us as a donation.

It has been my great honor and pleasure to serve as the chief resident in charge of the SIGN program at Rosales Hospital in Leon during this last year of my residency particularly being the first woman to hold this position. Recognizing that Orthopaedics and Traumatology has been an area traditionally considered reserved for male doctors, it has been a challenge for me to complete my education and develop my skills in this field and to become one of the few female orthopaedic and traumatology surgeons in my beautiful country of Nicaragua.

During this last year, a more organized follow-up program has been instituted to track patients treated with the SIGN nail. Following many shortcomings during the last 6 years, it gives me tremendous satisfaction to see that, after so much effort and so much work, our SIGN Nail Program has progressed in one year to the point of reaching the goals required for ongoing participation. This will allow us to continue to accomplish the humanitarian work of helping the people who have the greatest need.

In just one year we managed to improve the follow-up of patients to more than 80%, a figure not achieved in prior years.

This work, far from being a unilateral effort, has been the result of teamwork by a group of dedicated people interested in making improvements each day and committed to fighting for the common good.

Frynee Davila, M.D. is an orthopaedic surgeon at Rosales Hospital in Leon, Nicaragua. She has been working with SIGN Fracture Care International since 2011.