



Clinic Acquires Culposcope, an important diagnostic tool for Women's Health

The clinic will soon add a culposcope, a magnifying instrument for viewing pelvic tissue, that was recently donated to Serving at the Crossroads, enlarging its array of diagnostic instruments. Visiting specialists and local doctors, once they are trained, will have the capability to expand the healthcare offerings for women at the clinic. The task at hand is to see that the resident clinic physicians have the appropriate training to enable an accurate diagnosis on an on-going basis, not just when specialists are in town. In the short term, we are dependent up visiting specialists for culposcopy examinations and training.

Discussions are underway to add PAP smears as a routine test at the clinic, but the difficulty at the moment is that no one locally is available in the medical community to read them so the slides will have to be sent off to Santa Rosa. Similarly the doctors need to be looking for STIs (sexually transmitted infections) such as chlamydia and gonorrhea, as these are serious conditions, easily cured if caught early, but can lead to serious infection, infertility and even transmission to newborns if left untreated.

Within the past 12 months the clinic has seen four patients with Stage III ovarian cancer. The clinic was able to make contact with treatment centers in Santa Rosa, the nearest facility one hour and twenty minutes away and in San Pedro Sula (2 hrs) and Tegucigalpa (5 hrs) for more aggressive treatment, and to see that these patients had a local advocate from the La Entrada community to help them complete the administrative program enrollment process to receive treatment at those facilities.

Although cervical cancer recognition and prevention starts with education, treatment requires that we have the ability to do PAP smears, culposcopy and biopsies. We now have all of the essential tools for the examinations, but await the instructional component.