



Walk
OPERATION WALK
PITTSBURGH
granting the wish to walk

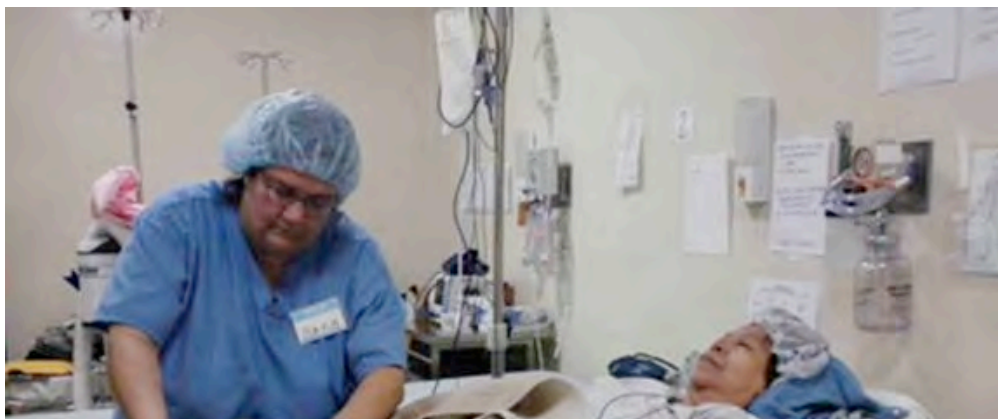
Operation Walk Pittsburgh is a not-for-profit volunteer medical service program that provides free surgical treatment to patients with disabling arthritis in developing countries. Operation Walk also educates in-country orthopaedic surgeons, nurses, physical therapists and other health care professionals on the treatments, processes and surgical techniques for diseases of the hip and knee.

Operation Walk Pittsburgh
Day 5: August 25, 2009

Today has been another busy day at the Santo Hermano Pedro Hospital. Today we'd like to share some interesting differences between health care here and health care in the United States.

The Santo Hermano Pedro Hospital is run by the order of Franciscan Monks. While the patients are not required to pay for surgery during our Operation Walk mission, most make a donation to the hospital. These donations are used to fund the orphanage that is part of the hospital. Many patients come from far distances, and their families will stay in the city at Casa de Fe (which is similar to our Ronald McDonald House). The difference is that if we run out of patient beds in the ward at the hospital, the patients who had surgery in the beginning of the week and are doing very well will be transferred to the Casa de Fe where their families will take care of them. The staff will visit to make rounds to assess the patients and give physical therapy, but there is no staff staying at Casa de Fe.

The surgical procedure is similar. The patient is taken to the pre-op area to be prepared for surgery. The patient has surgery and then is transferred to the PACU to recover for several hours before going to the Post-op Ward. When the patient is ready to be transferred to the ward, the nurse opens the door to the PACU and yells "patient" loudly across the hall. That is the signal for the staff to prepare for a new patient.





Barb admitting Clara to the PACU

On the post-op nursing units, there are no private rooms, but wards that hold three to ten beds. In one ward, beds line the walls with the foot of one bed touching the head of the next bed. In another ward, the beds are next to each other with about three feet of space between beds. There is very little privacy and (surprisingly) the patients don't seem to mind.

We made rounds this morning to change post-operative dressings. If a patient's ace bandage becomes soiled with drainage, the ace bandage is changed. The soiled bandage is placed in a bag and given to the family to take home, launder and bring back for the next morning's dressing change.



Tori and Tracy with a patient

The family also brings toilet paper (which is always in short supply) and toiletries to the patient. Patients' gowns and bedding are changed only as needed. A daily bath is not part of the nursing routine here. Operation Walk brought all the medications needed for the joint replacement surgeries. The family must bring in any medications the patient was taking prior to surgery (such as diabetic or cardiac medication).

Physical therapy is done at the patient's bedside and in the halls and gardens surrounding the wards. One patient who had surgery today required a walker before surgery. Because he could not afford to buy one, his family made him a walker out of lumber and nails.



Physical therapy with Frank

Visiting hours begin at 2 p.m. daily, and it seems that the patient's entire family comes to visit. The wards get really crowded, but it's almost like a celebration every day. We have heard no complaints from any of our patients or their families, only thanks and blessings for our being here.



Visiting hours

Another cultural note: When using the bathroom, used toilet paper is not flushed down the toilet, but thrown into a waste basket next to the toilet.

More photos are posted on our website [here](#).

For more information about how to support Operation Walk Pittsburgh or to make a tax deductible donation, please visit www.operationwalkpgh.org.



We look forward to hearing from you! To contact us, please email us at info@operationwalkpgh.org. Please do not reply to this email!

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