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KYBELE: OBSTETRIC ANESTHESIA OUTREACH TO TURKEY 2004

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Introduction: Kybele is a nonprofit organization with the mission of improving childbirth safety and comfort in developing countries through physician and public education. In September 2004, 8 anesthesiologists visited Turkey and dispersed to 10 hospitals for approximately 1 week. The goal of the visit was to evaluate the effectiveness of a coordinated short term teaching effort in promoting and sustaining country wide advancement in obstetric anesthesia care. This report describes the impact of the visit and suggests how to improve future programs.

Methods: Turkish teaching institutions were invited to host a visiting anesthesiologist; each organized a separate program for their guest. Host hospitals varied widely in obstetric practice, case load, man power and research efforts. Visiting doctors presented formal lectures and bedside teaching on numerous aspects of obstetric anesthesia. Upon return, Kybele developed a questionnaire to evaluate the program using open ended questions and a 5-point scale. The questionnaire was translated into Turkish and sent to participating hospitals 2 months after the visit. Answers were translated into English and summarized.

Results: All questionnaires were returned. Host hospitals evaluated their experience with the guest anesthesiologist as either excellent (8/10) or good (2/10). All visiting anesthesiologists were judged flexible and knowledgeable about obstetric anesthesia. 7/10 hospitals made changes in their clinical practice as a result of the program, 6/10 hospitals reported help with research and manuscript writing and all hospitals have maintained contact with their guest. Hospitals varied in their expectations of optimal stay; 3/10 hospitals would have preferred a 3-4 week stay, 3/10 a 2 week stay, 2/10 a 1 week stay and 2/10 a < 1 week stay. Suggestions to improve future programs included: earlier communication with the guest anesthesiologist, more help with research, a longer stay and the opportunity to visit the guest anesthesiologist's hospital. Finally, Kybele team members appeared on the front page of a major national newspaper and on 3 separate national television programs.

Discussion: Many anesthesiologists are interested in teaching abroad but find the customary one month volunteer cycle preclusive. The 2004 Kybele program indicates that a 1-2 week intervention can impact host institutions. The degree of media coverage also suggests that issues of regional anesthesia and cesarean are of national public interest. A bilingual host country coordinator is essential in facilitating organization and the media is an invaluable tool in promoting the advantages of regional anesthesia for childbirth. Future efforts may incorporate meetings and workshops in the training effort, however, direction interaction between a host hospital and guest anesthesiologist remains pivotal.

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Reference: <http://www.sabah.com.tr/2004/09/29/gun101.html>