

It's had to know where to begin, but let me start with this: After dinner, while a lower-leg amputation was being performed on the dining room table, a large truck arrived here unexpectedly with a shipment of food creating a big security problem as word spread and hundreds of people who had not eaten for days showed up anxiously hoping for some help.

We are all slept on the ground under the open sky last night because Mathew 25 is damaged from the earthquake and could collapse in an aftershock. As I mentioned yesterday, my main objective today was to med evac patients who we could not save, especially a young girl named Reginette who I mentioned yesterday. Her half torn-off foot had become badly infected and Jim and Barb were racing against deadly sepsis to save her life. She was running out of time while the few hospitals in Port au Prince that are still standing were so loaded with critical patients that they had no choice but to turn people away. We also had a young woman here with a traumatic leg amputation (her leg was sheared off above the knee as her home collapsed in the earthquake) who was already septic and slipping away. I received word that a hospital in Milot, up in the North part of the country had plenty of surgeons, but not enough patients. Unfortunately, after much trying and help from folks on this list, I could not find a way to coordinate helicopter flights in time. The shortage of gasoline and diesel prevented us from driving patients 2 hours away to Cange or other places. In the early afternoon as I was getting a little frantic, a man staggered into the compound with blood spurting from a fresh stab wound in his chest/shoulder area the apparent result of a robbery gone wrong. Jim quickly realized he had a lacerated artery and with no means to operate, was beyond our ability to repair. While Jim and Barb applied pressure and administered an IV to keep him alive, I ran on foot to the nearest hospital to see if they could help him. They said they could so I ran back and after several false starts due to a malfunctioning truck, we loaded him up and had him driven quickly to the hospital. By the time I got back, it was easy to see that our other two critical patients were crashing and needed surgery ASAP. We only had enough gas to get to Sacre Coeur Hospital in downtown Port au Prince. Fortunately we had heard that they could take more orthopedic surgical patients. After arriving there, it took a while to rally resources, due to the huge number of injured people waiting for help there. Fortunately, I eventually found some people that could see that both of our patients were fighting for their lives and they were quickly taken into surgery. Returning back to Mathew 25, I saw that the cavalry had arrive - A group of doctors, nurses a surgeon and support staff from Colorado had arrived and much to my surprise were performing surgery on our stabbing victim in the house.. Apparently, the hospital had just closed him up without repairing the artery and he showed up again rapidly losing blood. He survived the surgery, though it was touch-and-go, and is currently resting out back in the tent city there. I soon learned that our traumatic amputation patient had died. Her husband, who had begged me all the way to the hospital to keep her alive, came by to thank us for all we had done to try and save her. This is just one example of hundreds I have seen this week of the grace and courage of these unfortunate people. The folks in our makeshift hospital of sticks and tarps really look out for each other, quickly letting us know if another patient has a problem. The food distribution actually went quite smoothly because the people here are very reasonable and know that we are only trying to help. The young man who required an amputation this evening faced his predicament in typical Haitian style: with courage, grace, wisdom and appreciation. Please always remember this true Haitian spirit the next time some news outlet portays the Haitian people as ignorant, violent people, because that is a lie. As I start getting ready for sleep, I'm thinking about young Reginette. I don't yet know if she survived. Her little sister's body is still under the rubble and I pray her injured mother gets some good news for a change.

From Port au Prince

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