



VOLUNTEERISM IN DERMATOLOGY CAMBODIA AFTER THE WAR

Chan Vicheth, MD., FAADV, AADV Board Member
Senior Consultant, Department of Dermatology
Khmer-Soviet Friendship Hospital
Phnom Penh, Cambodia



History

- Before the 1979 (Country under Khmer-Rouge Regime)
 - *Insufficient access to basic needs (food, water, shelter)*
 - *No access to health services*
 - *No access to education*
 - *No human rights*
- After the war - present
 - *Public health services had to be re-established*
 - *No dermatology specialist until 1995*
 - *Dermatological cases were treated by GPs*
 - *Only 1 doctor went on to studied dermatology in Hungary*

Dermatology in Cambodia

- Diploma Course in Dermatology (Institute of Dermatology in Bangkok 1994-2018)
 - 26 doctors (*Scholarships & Private participants*)
 - *Course duration: 1 year academy*
 - *Supported by Japan (JICA) & Thailand (TICA) government*
- Diploma course in Dermatology (UHS, Phnom Penh): 2005-2010
 - *41 participants (4 courses)*
 - *Course duration: 18 months*
 - *Organized by University of Health and Science*
- Diplome d'Etude Specialist (DES) - 2010-present
 - *31 participants*
 - *Organized by UHS*
 - *Year 6th of Medical students (BSc) + 4 years training in dermatology*
 - *Learning based on lectures and clinical experience (Local & International lecturer)*
 - *Practice in hospitals with existing dermatology specialists*
- *Cambodian Dermatological Society (Established in 2012)*

Challenges in Dermatology

■ Specialist practice

- *Majority of doctors practice in Phnom Penh (lack of services in rural areas)*
- *Very few doctors work at rural areas (some does not practice in dermatology field, they practice as GPs or administrator because they didn't have dermatology department at their hospital).*

■ Developing country

- *Lack of funding for infectious diseases diagnosis and treatment (HIV, TB, Malaria,...)*
- *Dermatology is not being prioritized compared to other medical profession*
- *Lack of public awareness regarding dermatological conditions*

■ Technology – Laboratory testing

- *Lack of Dermato-pathology and Immunology laboratory for supporting diagnosis*
- *Complicated cases remain undiagnosed*

Volunteering in Dermatology

- In 1994, volunteering dermatologists from France and Germany
 - *Worked alongside local doctors and help train them in dermatology*
- Dermatologists in Cambodia
 - *Rural volunteering programs*
 - *Provide treatment for patients in the community*
 - *Educate GPs in rural area in dermatology*
- Education
 - *Clinical knowledge and experience for doctors and residents in hospital*
 - *Involved in teaching medical students at the UHS*
- Practice
 - *Providing various services in hospitals and rural areas*

Volunteering Programs

- Programs are organized through public hospitals with government support
 - *Provide services in rural areas*
- Cambodian Dermatological Society – established 2012
 - *Gather dermatologists from around the country*
 - *Provide education and training, and access to latest update in dermatology*
 - *Provide public education on dermatology*
 - *Establish national and international relationships with partners and other countries*
- Dermatology in Academic Medicine
 - *Specialized education in universities*
 - *Provide supportive teaching, clinical knowledge and experience*
- Volunteering in Community
 - *Public health education*

Dermatology in rural areas

- Out of the 24 provinces in Cambodia, we only have a limited number of qualified dermatology clinics available (mainly in larger cities).
- Rural hospitals does not have the infrastructure and human resources to accommodate a dermatology department within the hospitals.
- Patients with severe infections had to travel far away to the closest hospitals/clinics for treatment.
- Rural hospitals and clinics do not have sufficient technology or equipment to run tests and complete the diagnoses (especially with severe cases).
- Volunteers are organized specifically to go out to these areas to provide services and treatment where needed.

Cambodia's Need for Volunteering

- *Huge part of the country does not have access to proper health services; hence, giving them better access to quality treatment*
- *Opportunity to gain more experience on different cases for dermatologist and medical residents*
- *Opportunity to showcase what services can be offered to the public*
- *Helps draw the public's attention to dermatology as a profession*
- *Raising awareness to undiagnosed dermatological cases*
- *Identifying strengths and weaknesses*
- *Establishing strategies to reach out further into the community*
- *Giving back to the community*

Conclusion

■ Summary

Overall, the risen challenges are contributed by the lack of resources and support towards dermatology. However, sufficient education, government funding, human resources, accessibility to services can definitely further improve and grow this profession for the next generation.

■ Future prospects

- *Encourage more government support*
- *Improve education in universities – knowledge for future dermatologists*
- *Equipped with better technology – help with diagnosis*



Thank you for your attention