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ERIC WILKINSON, M.D.



# Beyond Borders:

## Mission to Yaruqui, Ecuador

**Eric P. Wilkinson, M.D., a clinical fellow at the House Clinic,** along with *Richard Wagner, M.D. of Global ENT Outreach (<http://geoutreach.org>), traveled to Quito and Yaruqui, Ecuador in June 2007 on a humanitarian ear surgery mission. He received support from the House Clinic and an American Academy of Otolaryngology Humanitarian Travel Grant for the trip.*

During the mission, the medical team performed surgeries for patients with otosclerosis and chronic otitis media. Sixty ear surgeries were performed over several days, including stapedectomy and tympanoplasty procedures. Local otolaryngologists with ear surgery experience participated in the preoperative and postoperative clinical assessments and surgeries. The surgical population consisted primarily of indigent patients from throughout Ecuador, including many from the northern portion of the country and the eastern Amazon region.

Clinical facilities for examining patients were available at the Fundación Oftalmológica del Valle, which also provided operating room facilities. The two operating rooms included one for procedures using local anesthesia and one for those requiring general anesthesia.

Surgical decision-making on the trip was aided by local audiologists donating their time to performing

audiometry on the patients seen in the clinic. Physical examination and tuning fork testing were critical in deciding which patients would benefit from surgical intervention.

“With an estimated 5% of the world’s population suffering from ear disorders, the need for educating and training ear, nose and throat (ENT) physicians in developing countries is critical,” says Richard Wagner, M.D.,

Global ENT. “The House organizations have sent medical staff to join our mission for two years in a row, and their skill and knowledge has allowed us to deliver care on a higher level than ever before.”

Long-term sustainability of a program to treat chronic otitis media (ear infection) in Ecuador is dependent on improving resident training in ear surgery in the region. In addition to the recent mission trip, efforts are underway with the cooperation of Global ENT Outreach, Christian Blind Mission (CBM) and the University of San Francisco, Quito to provide resident training in ear surgery in the area.

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*Kristin Seiderling, MD; Richard Wagner, MD; Eric Wilkinson, MD in front of ear clinic at Fundacion Oftalmológica del Valle, Yaruqui, Ecuador.*

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“This trip was a success due to the dedication of the multiple organizations and their hard-working volunteers,” said Eric Wilkinson, M.D. “I’m very grateful to all of the involved organizations for their heroic efforts and especially Global ENT Outreach, the Academy, House Clinic and House Ear Institute for the opportunity to participate in this effort.”

Local foundations contributing to the effort included the Fundación Nahim Isaías B., the Fundación Oftalmológica del Valle, and Christian Blind Mission (CBM). Global ENT Outreach, led by Richard Wagner, M.D., provided surgical equipment for the mission.

Corporate donors included Medtronic Xomed (surgical drills and ear packing



*Dr. Wilkinson with tympanoplasty patient*

materials), OtoMed (ear surgery dressings and packing materials), Ethicon (sutures), St. Vincent Medical Center, Los Angeles (surgical supplies), House Ear Institute (microscope viewing arms and surgical instruments), Alcon Laboratories (ototopical drops), and Daiichi-Sankyo (ototopical drops). Sincere thanks go to these donors for their contributions to the mission. ❖

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RICHARD WAGNER, M.D.

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**Shure Incorporated has been** a supporter of hearing conservation and the House Ear Institute for many years. Since 2002, Shure has partnered with the Institute’s Sound Partners™ program to provide free hearing screenings at professional audio and systems contractor trade shows like AES, InfoComm, NAMM and NSCA, and at the annual GRAMMY Camp of the GRAMMY Foundation.

“We are in the business of high-quality sound,” said Sandy LaMantia, President and CEO of Shure, “which is why we feel it’s our responsibility

to educate our customers, colleagues, and partners in the professional audio industry, about the importance of hearing conservation. We are grateful for the efforts of the House Ear Institute’s Sound Partners program and commend their important public education and research initiatives, which we hope will help save the hearing of many.”

In addition to supporting this program, Shure promotes hearing conservation by providing free hearing screenings and distributing hearing protection devices at trade shows, music conferences

and festivals, and to Shure’s employees.

*A unique educational program of the House Ear Institute, Sound Partners™ is dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of safe sound practices for better hearing health. Its goals are to educate all audio and entertainment professionals about safe sound practices and continue to carry the message about hearing conservation to the listening public through its teen initiative “It’s How You Listen That Counts.” For more information, please visit <http://soundpartners.hei.org>.*