



NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2005

WINGS is moving forward, but we need your help

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on our new-look website: www.wingsgate.org

Thank You

In these days of rapid international communication, we want to keep you abreast of our developments by using e-mail to send you our quarterly newsletter, and regular updates as exciting news happens, as well as cut down on costs (and save trees).

WINGS PILOTS INNOVATIVE STUDY OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

WINGS is conducting a study to determine the prevalence of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) among 1,200 women in Guatemala. A WINGS-commissioned survey in 2003 revealed that no organization in the country has even basic information about the prevalence of STIs, nor has any NGO or government office conducted any systematic testing.

Our prevalence test is funded by the US-based Kahn Foundation and J Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust. WINGS is coordinating with local institutions to help carry it out: the Health Sciences Dept. of the Rafael Landivar University (writing the protocol, getting it through the Ethics Committee, and reading the pap smear results); the Marco Antonio Foundation (whose lab will read most of the test results); and Common Hope (lab work coordination). The study will begin on May 2; test-taking will take three to four months, but data analysis will take longer and be done by an MPH summer intern from the UC at Berkeley.

All participants will receive pre- and post-test counseling in either Mayan Kaqchiquel or Spanish. They will receive pap smears (most cervical cancers are now considered to be STIs), as well as tests for HIV,

gonorrhea, gardnerella, chlamydia, trichomonas and syphilis. Any women with positive results will be treated, and their partners as well.

Those testing positive for HIV will be referred to the Roosevelt Hospital, which runs an HIV/AIDS clinic with Doctors without Borders.



Women at a WINGS health talk

NEWLY-TRAINED YOUTH HEALTH PROMOTERS CELEBRATE GRADUATION

The rates of teen pregnancies in Guatemala are alarming; half of 19 year olds have at least one child and 20% of 18 year olds have two or more children. In order to help reduce these figures, WINGS undertook a pilot youth education program which completed its first phase with a day-long camp in February.

120 teens from six areas of Chimaltenango enjoyed a fun-filled day and proudly received their graduation certificates. Thanks to generous grants from the Atkinson,

Lalor, and Irwin Andrew Porter Foundations, WINGS hired Youth Health Educator, Pilar Marroquin, who trained these youth for three months in: early pregnancy risks, family planning methods, and STIs.

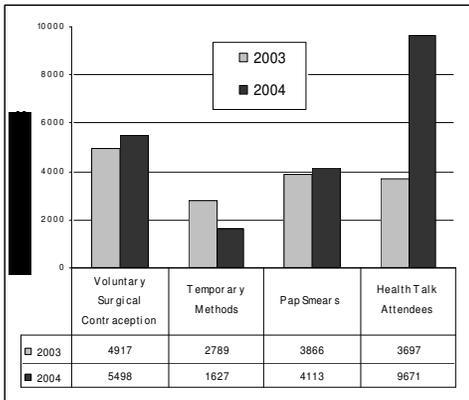
At the ceremony, graduates shared their experiences, listened to guest speakers, discussed what they had learned, and performed amusing skits based on reproductive health themes. Our staff was delighted with the level of comfort they displayed in talking about these subjects, which are traditionally taboo here.

From these 120 initially-trained adolescents, we have chosen the best 60 to receive additional training as Volunteer Youth Health Promoters. Their responsibilities will include: giving regular talks to their peers; selling condoms inexpensively; and providing advice and referrals for other family planning methods. In 2005 we plan to start a new round of training in two new municipalities, using improved educational material with illustrations by Garrett Carr.



Youth Health Promoters on Graduation Day

WINGS-PROVIDED SERVICES IN 2004



The graph above shows a modest increase in most of our services, but not what we had hoped for.

There is a decrease in the provision of temporary family planning methods, which can be explained by many users now receiving them for free from Ministry of Health centers (they are gradually becoming more reliably stocked). Plus, some clients have opted for voluntary surgical methods.

The number of vasectomies decreased due to the fact that for over half of the year the doctors in APROFAM's mobile units were only certified to provide tubal ligations. The demand for vasectomies is always low due to cultural/machismo reasons, but we are undertaking a Positive Deviance Study to try to learn the reasons why some men do choose to have a vasectomy.

Tubal ligations did not increase as much as hoped. This was due to APROFAM's limitations in pre-publicizing the presence of their mobile units; an obstacle we are jointly discussing how to address.

We did not meet the huge demand for pap smears because we halted them due to difficulties in coordinating and providing the proper follow-up, including the cost of medications and of procedures (colposcopies, Leeps

procedures, cryotherapies, and biopsies). WINGS is working with other institutions to be able to handle follow-up treatment more efficiently.

The educational talks given by our Health Promoters were, without a doubt, our biggest success last year. We provided 262 talks (as compared to 146 in 2003), and reached over 9,600 people, three times the number of 2003. This effort should result in increasing numbers of people using family planning methods this year, and we hope to be able to report further good news soon.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW EMPLOYEES, AND MANY THANKS TO OUR SKILLED VOLUNTEERS

NEW EMPLOYEES

MEIRA NEGAZ, Program Director, started in this newly-created position last November, and is a key step to institutional strengthening. Her role is to oversee our four areas of programming (family planning education and provision of methods, cervical cancer screening/treatment, train-the-trainer teenage program, and the study of Sexually Transmitted Infections), and to also ensure high quality. She will also help with fundraising. Meira brings broad experience in health, development, and international relations; is fluent in both English and Spanish; and is a delight to work with.

FRANCESCA WADE, Office Manager and Administrator, will help run the office, write the newsletter, and keep our website updated. From the UK, she has a background in journalism, PR, and as a magazine editor.

VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS

RYAN WEINGAST, created our

indispensable Client Database, so that we can now keep track of our services and our clients.

GARRETT CARR, Graphic Designer from Ireland, not only prepared our sophisticated new website, but in his three months here also redesigned our brochure and created many illustrations for educational materials for our Health Promoters to use.

HUNT KOOIKER, M.D. and MPH, is a Public and Reproductive Health physician from San Diego. Hunt is dedicating six months of his time, and professional expertise, to help guide us in all of our work, particularly in pap smears and STIs. He is also creating a medication formulary to treat the most common findings.

BARBARA CERNIKOVSKI, CPA, formerly with Price Waterhouse, now resides in Antigua. Barbara has set up our Quick Books accounting system, is keeping WINGS' books, filing our taxes, and making cash-flow charts to help with future strategic planning.

ANGIE ROBERTSON, an **Intern** funded by WINGS' donor Sterling Franklin, will be with us for six months to strengthen our Youth WINGS program, and help conduct vasectomy and IUD Positive Deviance Studies.

MARLIN DEARDEN, Professor in health care, preventive medicine, and public health, as well as an **Epidemiologist** and amateur photographer, helped develop the base-line study for Youth WINGS promoters. And, while shadowing our Health Promoters, he took some great photos for our image library.

MAGGIE COCHRAN, Volunteer, helped analyze our baseline studies for Youth WINGS.

LINDA AND BILL GREEN, Social Worker and Physician, undertook an assessment around Lake Atitlan to determine the need and desire for reproductive health services, and to guide WINGS to target interventions.

FACES OF WINGS

MARIA ELENA

Doña Elena (30), was married at 15 and has six children (14,11,9,6,3 & 1). After her third child she decided she didn't want any more. She spoke to her husband, but unfortunately her request was only met by abuse, both physical and verbal. She had no choice but to continue having children, even though she dreamed about how much better her life would be if she didn't get pregnant.

In February, WINGS visited her community to give talks on family planning and contraception. Elena asked for help and then two months later received a tugal ligation.



Now Elena is telling her neighbours about WINGS, so we are going to provide other women from her community.

MARTA HERMINIA

Doña Marta (49) lives in a community on the shores of Lake Atitlan. When she heard there was going to be a WINGS-sponsored pap-smear clinic, she persuaded a number of women from her community to come to the clinic. She then set an example, by being the first one to have the pap smear.

She is a widow with three grown children, and works in a restaurant. Martha helps motivate women in her community to be more aware of their own health, and how to achieve and maintain it.



Women's International Network for Guatemalan Solutions is a non-profit organization

Please send donations to: 793 Ashbury Street, San Francisco, CA 94117, USA

To donate on line: www.wingsguate.org For more information, email: info@wingsguate.org

Look out for our next issue in **JULY**