

Cuba is a Medical Superpower

03/11/2014



The news reached me from the city of Moron, in Cuba's province of Ciego de Avila. The title got me thinking immediately. The piece was about a 13-year-old teenager who, while enjoying carnival festivities at an amusement park in the town of Cacahual fell from a height of about 8 meters, hit the pavement and suffered a serious head trauma.

The kid was taken, unconscious, to the Roberto Rodriguez Hospital in Moron, where they diagnosed him with a severe cranioencephalic trauma, a traumatic bursting of the cranial vault, a diffuse, grade 4 axonal lesion, a traumatic subarachnoid hemorrhage and a severe pulmonary contusion.

A complex, 4-hour-long surgical procedure (known as a decompressive craniectomy) was performed in the emergency room.

According to the doctor's statement, 50 percent of the upper skull was removed and the cranial cavity expanded so that the swollen brain had room to expand and did not suffer the dangerous effects of intracranial hypertension, common in these cases.

A system for monitoring his intracranial pressure continuously was set up to follow the behavior of this variable and others, such as his cerebral perfusion and the cranium's hemodynamics.

The patient made favorable progress, and a computerized axial tomography showed that his neurological structures were in perfect state, so he was discharged.

The boy's mother said she didn't know how to thank the doctors, nurses and auxiliary personnel for their efforts and the loving dedication they showed them at the hospital.

The case of the 13-year-old boy saved at the hospital in Moron is but one example of the many lives saved by Cuba's public health system, not only in Cuba, but in more than 60 countries around the world as well.

That said, the US blockade on Cuba prevents the island from obtaining numerous pieces of medical equipment, medications and reagents that would help save the lives of more children and adults.

It is incomprehensible for me that a country should deny another the possibility of acquiring medical supplies used to save lives, especially those of children. They are inhumane measures that can only be conceived by sick minds moved by fascist hatred.

Cuba, however, continues to make huge efforts to save lives and, thanks to the care and love that its well-trained doctors offer the people, feats like the one described at the beginning of this post are accomplished.

David Nabarro, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General, recently visited Havana to discuss the issue of Ebola and declared: "When deployment is complete (...) you will have sent 255 frontline workers to West Africa. This is more than those sent by Doctors Without Borders and the International Federation of the Red Cross, it is more than what the United States or the United Kingdom have sent, more than China sent (...)"

After reading a message from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, Nabarro said that the sending of thousands of specialists to more than 39 countries in Africa and other nations in recent years demonstrates Cuba's solidarity in the sphere of health. I would add: it also demonstrates that Cuba is, without a doubt, a medical superpower.

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