

In addition, the physicians at the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare were working in conjunction with SSMI to develop a mid-day meal scheme. Whereas most developed countries have laws regulating school lunches, there is no such legislation in India. Therefore SSMI is at the forefront of creating regulations for school lunches in order to provide proper nutrition to all students throughout India. These regulations include food safety concerns such as water portability, food free of microbial contamination, and overall kitchen hygiene, as well as diversity of food to ensure adequate nutrition. I was able to see the kitchen at SSMI and the mass amount of food that was being prepared for all of the students that attend.

My last week in New Delhi I worked with a team of people performing free health clinics in small villages located on the outskirts of New Delhi. The main goal of these clinics was to provide free eye screenings for both children and adults. However, the team also screened for hypertension and diabetes through blood glucose testing and blood pressure readings.

Out of all the things I did while in India, working with the health clinic team was by far my favorite experience. The long trips to villages with the team were always a blast as they tried to teach me Hindi words and phrases. In return, I would try to help them with their English as well as talk about my life in America. Before working with them, I had been hesitant to try many of the local dishes for fear of becoming sick. However, upon discovering my lack of exposure to Indian cuisine, the team made it their mission to enrich me with all types of Indian dishes.



The first two days working with the team, I assisted with setting up and registering patients for the clinic. It was during this time that I was able to see the magnitude of the poverty in these so-called “slums.” The health clinics were held in whatever room was available in the village that we were visiting. These rooms were often cramped, had no air-conditioning and barely contained enough room to fit 10 people. In addition, for many of the people we saw at these clinics, it was their first exposure to the health system. Having worked at numerous free health clinics back home in the United States, I had seen my fair share of people with limited access to health care, but never to this magnitude.

Although there are very few obese people in India, type 2 diabetes is a major disease that plagues many of the older population. This prevalence of diabetes is most likely

attributed to their high carb diet. During the last few days I was allowed to take blood glucose measurements, as well as blood pressure readings. I was honestly amazed at some of the readings I measured, especially the blood glucose levels. In America, some of these readings would permit immediate transport to a hospital to help control the blood glucose levels and subsequently help equip these patients with proper medication. However, due to the poverty associated with these areas, the best we could do was to counsel them on how to control their diabetes or hypertension through proper diet and exercise.



My last weekend in India, I was able to visit some of the main tourist locations with some of the other volunteers. Although I had visited many of the famous landmarks in New Delhi (i.e. India Gate, Humayun's Tomb, Gurudwara Temple, etc.), I had not yet been able to travel out of the state. The weekend started with a trip to Agra to see the Taj Mahal, one of

the Seven Wonders of the World. The next day, our group traveled to the city of Jaipur, also known as the Pink City for its trademark building color. Jaipur is a city with a rich history that contains many old forts and palaces. One of my favorite places we visited, the Amer Fort, sits atop a large hill that offers a spectacular view of the city of Jaipur.



In all, my trip to India is one I will never forget. From the crowded highways to the extreme weather conditions, India is a bustling place with a rich culture. I would like to thank the Brody family for providing me with such an amazing opportunity. This trip not only provided me with a greater appreciation for the life I have been given, but also

provided me with a foundation that will guide me in my future endeavors to help those less fortunate than myself.