Assessing Maternal and Child Healthcare Needs in Rural Philippines
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Background
- Gawad Kalinga Enchanted Farm Innovations, Inc., (GK) is a non-governmental organization founded for the purpose of poverty alleviation in the Philippines.
- GK developed and implemented a model community located in Angat, Bulacan as a center for promoting social entrepreneurship, creating sustainable livelihoods for selected beneficiaries.
- Though GK has greatly improved the lives of more than 60,000 families across 2,000 communities, the healthcare sector remains underdeveloped.

Method
- Immersed, specifically among women of the community (i.e., visit homes, workplaces, marketplace) in hopes of establishing rapport and gain general, albeit valuable self-reported community health information and healthcare issues.

General Observations
- Malnutrition: diets high in sodium, glucose, and saturated fats leading to hypertension and diabetes; compromised access to fresh fruits and vegetables, and dairy; calcium and iron deficiency prevalent, particularly among women
- Family Planning: resources largely unavailable or inaccessible; little to no sexual education; unplanned pregnancies, large families (e.g., >5 children), and illegal abortions via misoprostol (Cytotec) and/or hilots (“midwives”) commonplace
- Domestic Abuse: (i.e., violence against women and child abuse); oftentimes seen in families with unemployed fathers and/or fathers suffering from mental and/or substance abuse; cultural and religious ideas and/or financial circumstances discourage divorce

Future Objectives
- Share observations with interested students from School of Biomedical Sciences, School of Nursing, and School of Medicine in hopes of establishing GK as a longitudinal clinical site.
- Generate research projects for myself and students to address above healthcare issues and provide for vulnerable populations of the Philippines in the near future.

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Summer Objectives
- Conduct a general community assessment (50 nuclear families) and generate a list of healthcare concerns with a focus on maternal and child healthcare issues as a personal interest.
- Practice basic clinical skills (i.e., physical exam, vaccine administration, wound cleaning) and cultural competency.
- Experience Filipino culture, learn conversational Tagalog, and explore a few of the 7,107 islands of the Philippines.

Acknowledgements and Contact
- I would like to thank all the women who let me into their homes, trusted me, and believed in our ability to provide care. They have taught me more than I can put into words.
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