The challenges of working in resource-poor settings

Lisa Searle
General practitioner

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- Lack of access
  - roads and other infrastructure
  - negotiation with local authorities
- Security
- Lack of facilities
- Difficulty in obtaining medications and other medical and non-medical supplies
- Lack of trust and awareness within the community
- Lack of trained local staff
- Difficulty in recruiting and retaining international staff
- Language barriers
- Cultural and religious barriers

Each of these points was discussed in further detail with photos and examples of working in Pakistan, Congo and Haiti with Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders).

A brief history of Medecins Sans Frontieres

- Formed in 1971 in France by a group of French doctors and journalists.
- The doctors had been working with the International Committee of the Red Cross in Biafra, a region of Nigeria where they'd seen the government deliberately block food from reaching people in the Biafra region (the photo is from Biafra at the time).
- In founding Médecins Sans Frontières they wanted to create an organisation that could:
  - provide emergency medical assistance to those who need it most
  - when medical assistance alone is not enough to continue saving lives, speak out about the plight of patients in distress.

MSF is a private international medical association. They offer assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict, without discrimination and irrespective of race, religion, creed or political affiliation.
Presenter

Lisa Searle grew up in rural Tasmania and completed medical school in 2006 at the University of Tasmania. She has always been interested in rural health and working in resource-poor communities. During her degree she did electives in remote Thailand and in the Philippines, and after graduation she became involved with the Peter Hewitt Care for Africa Foundation and did a couple of trips to work in a small remote hospital in Tanzania. In 2009, after many years of waiting and planning, she finally joined Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders). Lisa has so far completed three missions with Médecins Sans Frontières and is planning another one later this year. Lisa currently lives and works in rural Tasmania. She is working as a GP registrar but has just passed her final exams to gain her GP fellowship.