

**HAITI REPORT- GLOBAL HEALTH TRIP**  
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**ANGELA ADAMS-HARRISON, MD**

Haiti is a beautiful country that has gone through very tumultuous times. One of the most recent events was the earthquake of January 12, 2010. Getting supplies and health care to areas with poor infrastructure and roads that were further damaged by the earthquake was a real challenge. The earthquake also stressed an already inadequate healthcare system.

Never having traveled to Haiti before, I was not sure what I would find. One of the first things I noticed on arrival in La Valle, Haiti was the motorcycle traffic. Small ones, medium sized ones, one driver, one driver with one passenger to one driver with three passengers. All driving fast, no helmets, and no street signs. Most of the drivers were young men. Not to mention cars traveling on the same roads without street signs. This was a recipe for disaster. It did not take long being in the clinic to see the results.

As the poorest country in the western hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world, Haiti does not have the infrastructure for a modern working transportation system. (1) This being the case, when the 2010 earthquake hit, there was great difficulty getting supplies and healthcare to areas that already did not have adequate roads. Hence the motorcycle became the way to get into these areas. Many aid organizations brought in motorcycles so that aid could be taken to areas that did not have roads that would allow cars or trucks to pass, especially in the more rural areas. Organizations such as the Christian Motorcycle Association brought in motorcycles so that pastors could go to remote areas and supply spiritual support. (2)

These many motorcycles have been left in country being used by many young men driving with the carelessness of youth and the frustration of being in a place where it is difficult to get from place to place and difficult to make a living. They are operating as unofficial taxi services. Their customers do not have the option of wearing a helmet and the drivers would not likely wear helmets if they were given to them because they are not "cool". (3)

The most frustrating thing for me was seeing the victims of motorcycle accidents come in to the hospital and not being able to offer them anything except IV fluids and CPR. No blood products were available, no quick method of transportation to the city where there would be more resources for treatment. If injuries were minor such as lacerations, they could be repaired; however internal injuries that may require transfusions, injuries that required x-rays could not be treated. Here in the United States, many of the lethal injuries in Haiti could be treated relatively easily. The other thing that is frustrating is how we are trying so much to help Haiti but leave more problems behind. We think about the acute problem but not the results of what we do. Leaving the motorcycles is fine but then we must also leave helmets with education on their importance. The death of so many young people will make it even harder for Haiti to rise up from poverty.

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