



Heart to Heart Global Cardiac Care

Measurably Expanding Access Since 1989

SITE: TORREON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL
LOCATION: TORREON, MEXICO

DECEMBER 05-15, 2018
EXPLORATORY SURGICAL-
EDUCATIONAL MISSION



THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE FAMILY

When we first met Liah, she was playing joyfully with her brother Diego in the waiting room. Her parents, Cesia and Jesus, told us that they were sad and frustrated about Liah’s heart defect, but that their spirits lifted when they learned about being treated by Heart to Heart specialists. When describing their efforts to find the right treatment for Liah, they mentioned their four-hour car trip to bring her to Torreon for surgery. Jesus picked Liah up and flew her around as though she were an airplane. Her giggling was contagious.

CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT AND MEDICAL HISTORY

Liah’s parents were given conflicting medical advice from numerous doctors. When Liah was two months old, a doctor detected a heart murmur during a regular checkup. Liah’s parents were told to “have faith and hope it’s nothing.” Cesia and Jesus remained concerned, but medical specialists continued to tell them that nothing was wrong with their baby. One day, when Liah had a cold, her parents took her to yet another doctor who grew surprised while listening to her heart, and asked why nothing had been done to treat her heart condition.

Jesus looked into treatment options at the established children’s hospital in Torreon, about 150 miles from Durango. There, Liah underwent an echocardiogram, an ultrasound examination of the heart. She was diagnosed with congenital heart disease. Once on the ground, the Heart to Heart-Torreon team confirmed her diagnosis as patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) and a moderately dysfunctional mitral valve. Liah was selected as one of five patients to undergo a cardiac procedure during Heart to Heart’s first surgical-educational mission in Mexico.

CURRENT CONDITION

Liah underwent surgery to have her PDA closed on December 12, 2018. The Heart to Heart-Torreon team opted not to intervene on her mitral valve, but Liah will remain under medical observation throughout her childhood. (In general, cardiac specialists try to avoid operating on children’s valves, since heart valves grow and change shape as a child grows bigger with age.)

Two days after the procedure, Liah’s parents were beside her in the ICU, where she was recovering quickly. Cesia and Jesus never gave up on finding their daughter the help she needed. When asked what advice they would give families whose children have heart defects, Cesia replied, “Don’t wait. Give your kids attention as soon as you notice something – because not waiting means you could save your child’s life.”

PATIENT PROFILE

Child	Liah O.
Age	15 months old
DOB	September 2, 2017
Birth Weight	6 lbs 3 oz
Home	Durango
Diagnosis	Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA); moderate mitral valve regurgitation
Surgical procedure	Patent ductus arteriosus (PDA) ligation December 12, 2018

Based on an interview conducted in Spanish by Hannah Hunter, Heart to Heart staff with the help of an interpreter.