



Heart to Heart Global Cardiac Care

Measurably Expanding Access Since 1989

SITE: NATIONAL HOSPITAL
LOCATION: ASUNCION, PARAGUAY

APRIL 04-13 2019
EXPLORATORY SURGICAL-
EDUCATIONAL MISSION



THE HOUSEHOLD AND THE FAMILY

Mabel is a petite young woman, reserved and shy, with a kindness in her eyes and a sweet smile. In Paraguay, about half the population speak both Spanish and Guarani. Like one-third of Paraguayans, Mabel speaks only Guarani, an indigenous language. To conduct our interview, we are assisted by two interpreters: one to interpret to/from English-Spanish, and another to interpret to/from Spanish-Guarani.

The second of four children, Mabel lives with her parents and three siblings. Her father is a carpenter and the sole breadwinner of the family. At 23 years of age, Mabel will be the youngest patient to be operated on by our Heart to Heart-Paraguay team.

MEDICAL HISTORY

Mabel worked as a housekeeper before she became symptomatic and could no longer manage due to her heart condition. Like so many young people living in countries with underdeveloped healthcare, her heart problem was entirely preventable. She fell ill at age 15 with rheumatic fever. Due to a lack of penicillin, she developed rheumatic heart disease, causing permanent damage to her mitral valve. She had no symptoms until a few years ago, when she began experiencing heart palpitations, shortness of breath, and back pain. As her condition worsened, her activities became increasingly limited until, as she told us, she was “no longer able to do anything.”

Her attentive boyfriend listens to our interview closely. When offered the opportunity to speak with Mabel’s surgeon, he poses thoughtful questions about her postoperative nutritional needs and about the possibility of them having children together.

Mabel will not be restricted from giving birth, and is delighted at the prospect of becoming a mother. If she were to become pregnant, it would be ideal for her to be in contact with her cardiology team so they may monitor her heart health.

PATIENT PROFILE

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Name | Mabel D. |
| Age | 23 years old |
| DOB | April 26, 1995 |
| Diagnosis | Severe mitral regurgitation due to rheumatic heart disease |
| Surgical procedure | Mitral valve replacement April 9, 2019 |

CURRENT CONDITION

On April 9, the joint Heart to Heart-Paraguay team successfully performed open heart surgery on Mabel, replacing her mitral valve with a bioprosthetic one donated by Edwards Lifesciences in partnership with Americares. She recovered quickly in the intensive care unit and was extubated later that same day. Her post-operative course went smoothly. Heart to Heart wishes the best for Mabel and her future family!

Based on an interview conducted by Josie Everett, Heart to Heart staff, with the aid of a volunteer interpreter.