



Penn Orthopaedics in Trinidad

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Dr. Vincent Arlet, Chief of Orthopaedic Spine Surgery at Penn Orthopaedics, participates in a Scoliosis Research Society-endorsed global outreach program. Through this program, Dr. Arlet partners with Dr. David Toby in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Dr. Toby provides orthopaedic care at the Princess Elizabeth Centre of Physically Handicapped Children. Dr. Toby performs an average of 50 spinal deformity procedures annually at the center. Dr. Arlet travels to Trinidad 3-4 times per year to perform complex surgical cases necessitating two spine surgeons. In addition, Dr. Arlet brings with him volunteer equipment and staff to perform intraoperative neuromonitoring, donated implants and, frequently, a resident assistant. For Dr. Arlet, this is commendable outreach work to say the least, but for the residents, it is a potentially career altering experience. It is difficult to express in words the gravity of experiencing different cultures in the role of healthcare provider. For a US trainee, it is enlightening to experience firsthand what can be accomplished surgically with relatively sparse resources and the impact of that care on the patient population. Additionally, the opportunity to observe pathology not frequently encountered stateside, such as scoliosis deformity secondary to polio or neuromuscular scoliosis as a sequelae of Guillain-Barré Syndrome, is invaluable. Aside from the educational enrichment provided, the venue itself provided a rich cultural experience. As the



southernmost island of the Caribbean with a truly melting pot heritage, combining British, French, Dutch, and Spanish influence, Trinidad provides an pleasant dry season, diverse culinary traditions, ethnically diverse peoples, and world-class rum. I feel very blessed to have had the opportunity to participate in this program and would not hesitate to do so again in the future.