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### **Medical Volunteerism - Mitigating Collateral Damage**

Abstract:

In the past few decades volunteer tourism has grown into a billion dollar travel industry. Among such volunteering activities, a significant portion centers around the provision of medical and health services. Medical volunteerism has also been embraced by many medical schools with enthusiasm. With the many benefits cited for both the volunteers and those being helped, it looked like a win-win situation for all. Yet in recent years there has been an increasing call for caution, as more and more negative impacts arising from short-term medical volunteering projects have been reported. Many have stressed the need for ethical guidelines to be adapted by charities and non-governmental organizations participating in medical volunteerism. In this presentation the various negative impacts that may result from well-intentioned medical volunteerism are reviewed and the ways to mitigate those risks discussed.