

WHAT IS A MENINGOCELE?

In layman's terms, a meningocele is a defect in the brain and spinal cord container. Contents can pop out of the container causing disfigurement and neurological deficits.

This is quite often caused by lack of folic acid in early pregnancy and also improper diet. Research is being done on other causes such as environmental. During our mission last year we found that many of mothers and fathers were exposed to DDT that was used in the rice fields.

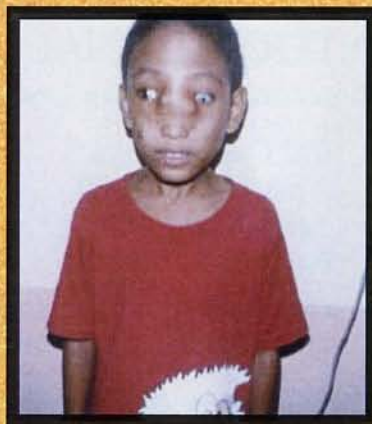
This condition is seen frequently in the Philippines; however, many neurosurgeons in the states have never seen a case of it.



These are before and after pictures of a man treated during our January 2004 mission. Beside the apparent meningocele, he was born with one eye missing. The meningocele was in an area blocking his vision from the other eye and he was considered blind. He learned how to be a masseuse and earned his meager living from that.



PATIENTS MENINGOCELE MISSION 2005



MENINGOCELE MISSION

A special meningocele mission was performed at the Subic Bay Medical Center in 2004. Two neurosurgeons from the Philippines and four reconstructive surgeons from London performed the surgery. A pediatrician from Ohio donated her time in pre- and post-op care. Eight patients were operated on and found a new lease on life. Many of them had been ostracized from society due to their facial deformities. The children did not want to attend school since the other children made fun of them.

The physicians donated their time, which was up to 15 hours of work on each child. The hospital graciously allowed each child free room and meals, and no charge was made for the use of the operating room. However, many other expenses were incurred including medicines, anesthesia, and surgical supplies. The children also had to be kept in the area for follow-up after discharge from the hospital. Most of them lived high in the mountains in areas without transportation readily available.



HOPE Foundation International patients with doctors, nurses, and volunteers.