



Volunteer doctor's experience of the free cardiology echocardiogram clinic in Mannar, June 2017

Dr Wala Mattar BSc, MD, MRCP

Senior Interventional cardiology fellow. Harefield Hospital, UK

For five days in June 2017 I took part in a charity medical project in Sri Lanka. Mannar is a small town in north Sri Lanka that suffered a lot from the civil war for more than three decades. It is underdeveloped. People don't have access to advanced medical care. They don't have any cardiologists and to receive the special care, they need to travel more than 100 miles just to get a diagnostic test. We have set a 5-day charity echocardiography clinic (heart ultrasound scans) to help the people there. There are no words that can describe what experienced! Every single person I've met was amazing. The beautiful smiles won't leave their faces despite how much they suffer and how difficult the living circumstances are. The patients were waiting for hours without any of them complaining and they will be thanking us deeply after their scans were done. The nurses were looking after all of us. Doing what they can and more. Staying (willingly) late in the evening until we finish the list. I have met the local people and been to their houses and was inspired by their humbleness and satisfaction.

I'm so glad I've decided to be part of this project. This is an experience that I will cherish for the rest of my life.
