

From the Seychelles to Stuttgart -- An Aussie DC Travels to Treat

Howard W. O'Meara , DC

Early in January 1993, I received a phone call from the island government of the Seychelles, asking if I would be available to go there for six months to assist them in their build up to the Indian Ocean Games (hosted by the Seychelles).

Due to work commitments, my family and I were unable to partake in the six-month adventure, however, a two-month term was negotiated and agreed upon.

We scurried to our maps and discovered that the Seychelles are some one-hundred islands lying off the coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean, 700 miles northeast of Madagascar. The main island (Mahe) has a population of 60,000 with some 10,000 other people being scattered among the other island groups. Pictures of Mahe showed waving tropical palms, crystal clear waters, and beautiful beaches.

My family and I departed Australian shores on the 9th of July, spent three days in Singapore (to break the travel for our small children), then on to the Seychelles. Our arrival was quite harrowing, with strong cross winds during landing.

Once our feet were safely on terra firma, we immediately experienced the slower pace of the islands. This proved to be very frustrating at first, until we realised that what wasn't done today may be done some time in the future.

We settled into our hotel that was to be our home for the next two months. The government certainly chose an ideal location for us: a hotel perched on the hillside overlooking the coral reefs and beautiful islands. It certainly made life easier waking up to that view every day.

After two days of settling in, my work began. My role initially was one of organising the medical team for the Seychelles' contingent. Apart from myself, the medical team consisted of an exercise physiologist from America, one medical doctor (from Cuba), and an MD and orthopedic surgeon from the Seychelles. Our responsibility was the Seychelles' personnel only. There were other doctors, physiotherapists, trainers, etc., involved in the general medical team whose responsibility it was to treat all other visiting teams and handle emergencies (e.g., broken limbs) at the

time of competition.

A special clinic was organised every morning for the Seychelles' contingent (sailing, windboarding, boxing, judo, athletics, badminton, table tennis, weightlifting, swimming, football, basketball, volleyball). During the afternoons, we visited each individual sport at their various training venues. As the games drew closer, the pace increased in the morning clinic, usually resulting in a waiting room often full to bursting. My evenings stretched through to midnight or later.

The games proved to be very successful both from a competitive and chiropractic viewpoint. Chiropractic is now well accepted within the Indian Ocean countries and all athletes benefitted by the treatment given.

One of the interesting aspects for me personally, was being able to assist in several arthroscopic examinations that were performed by a visiting American orthopedic surgeon. We exchanged many viewpoints, and observed each other at work. The surgeon received chiropractic care, and we each benefitted, not only in friendship, but in mutual respect and a furthering of the understanding of chiropractic.

Stopover in Stuttgart

On the 9th of August, I left my family "languishing" in the tropical waters of the islands and flew to Stuttgart to take part in the 4th World Athletic Championships. Once again, I was treating the athletes from Ghana and Botswana and it was great to see old friends and make new ones. Life in the athletic village was relaxed and interesting, although one was still surrounded by barbed wire and high security measures. It would appear that the majority of athletes have grown to accept the security measures at these international events. Perhaps the 21st century will not require us to strip naked and parade in front of cameras, but you never know.

I returned to the Seychelles on the 21st of August and took part in the Indian Ocean Games (Aug. 21-28). The number of chiropractic treatments given during our time in the Seychelles was in excess of 600. Although records were kept at the clinic and in the afternoon sessions, it was impossible to accurately record the many treatments given on site during the competition.

As a family, we returned to Australia Aug. 29th and have since taken several weeks to readjust back to Australian lifestyle and pace. It was a rewarding time for myself and my family, and it was one experience we will treasure for many years to come.

Howard W. O'Meara, DC
Mooloolaba, Queensland

Australia

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