Servant leadership and research: Using both to build sustainable service projects

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Objectives and disclosure

- Define servant leadership
- Describe how servant nurse leaders can promote the building of sustainable service projects in developing countries
- Explain how the results of a nurse-led research project to install and study the effects of clean water filters in rural Guatemalan villages relate to servant leadership
- No disclosures
Introduction: Nurses drawn to service

- Service oriented profession
- Servant leadership = leaders who are servants first.
- Nurses are servant leaders
Service opportunities: medical missions

- Great potential for benefit
- Sponsoring organization
- Medical care, teaching, supplies
Criticisms

- Lead to culture of dependency
- volunTOURism
- Culturally insensitive
- Inadvertently cause harm
- Lack of sustainability
The characteristics of servant leadership

- Chose to serve: aspiration to lead
- Encouragement and nurturing of followers
- Manage with respect, honesty, and love
Spears (2002)

- Listening, empathy, awareness
- Persuasion, stewardship, commitment
- Foresight & conceptualization
Applying the concepts of servant leadership to service

#1. Build community through listening, empathy and awareness
  - Careful choice of a service program
    - The organization
    - The team
    - The culture
#2. Building vision through persuasion, stewardship and commitment

- Team recruitment
- Role modeling
- Authenticity
- Commitment to the work
#3. Build sustainability through foresight, conceptualization, and research

- Consider sustainability
- Empirical evidence for support of sustainable programs
Example: Guatemalan water filter project.

- Medical mission trip to Guatemala December 2015
- High numbers of patients with infections in 2 rural clinics
- Hygiene classes offered
Tour of village and water situation
Installation of clean water filters

- Sponsor located
- Collaboration with organization for installation
- Re-assessment of infection rates December 2016.
Other relevant types of research

- Descriptive studies with large and diverse samples
- Comparative studies with other cultures
- Relational studies linking behaviors and outcomes or interventions and outcomes

Vented stove project
Summary

- Nurses are servant leaders
- Skills of servant leadership can help build community, vision, sustainability into projects
Thank you