

Brazilian Mission Trains Algerian Doctors in Children Heart Surgery

Contributed by Alexandre Rocha
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Doctors from Brazil's National Institute of Cardiology (INC), based in the southeastern Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro, will be traveling to Algeria once again this month in order to resume an exchange program in pediatric heart surgery.

This will be the third time that the group heads to the Arab country since last December to carry out highly complex surgical procedures with the aim of training Algerian professionals.

According to the head of the INC pediatric heart surgery service and team coordinator, José Caliani, during the two previous trips, 38 children underwent surgery. Algeria is interested in acquiring the know-how because this type of procedure is carried out abroad, usually in France, which leads to high costs. Furthermore, patients recover more easily in a family environment.

The exchange agreement, signed by the Brazilian President, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, during a visit to Algeria in 2006, is expected to continue for three years counting from January 2008. According to Caliani, the Brazilian MDs should take two to three trips a year until the project ends.

In addition to surgical procedures attended by Algerian doctors, the program includes theoretical lessons. "We have received some great feedback, they are very pleased. Our work has been widely reported by the local media," Caliani said.

According to him, the project is being regarded as a model for international cooperation, so much so that the Brazilian ambassador to Algiers, Sérgio Danese, invited him to make a public presentation on the subject during his stay in Algeria.

"This is an honor for us," he asserted. His Algerian colleagues, he claimed, have great interest in learning the techniques, which makes work easier and more joyful.

The group is comprised of three doctors. Besides Caliani, also participating are an anesthetists and a specialist in extracorporeal perfusion - i.e., use of a machine which temporarily replaces the heart and lung functions, oxygenating and pumping blood, and thus allowing for the heart to be stopped for surgical intervention to occur.

They should travel to Algeria on June 11 and return June 28.

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