

# Floating doctors-the work and goals of the Dental team working with the Ngobe-Bugle populations in Panama

Hollie Hawrot

*Floating Doctors, Panama*

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## Abstract

The Ngobe-Bugle populations, who are indigenous to Panama, are the largest of the three indigenous groups. Historically, they had limited contact with dental professionals and therefore, have received minimal oral health education and treatment. Floating doctors is a non-profit organization, which has a dental program that aims to improve the oral health of this population. Floating doctor's dental health program has been running for four years and focuses on oral health education, prevention and holistic dentistry to improve the quality of life of the Ngobe-Bugle people. As the Ngobe-Bugle population is divided into multiple communities in different locations, floating doctors travels remotely by boat to 26 different locations on a three monthly basis. Mobile dental equipment is taken to the communities and extractions, restorations, stainless steel crowns and preventative treatment is provided. Furthermore, oral health education and the provision

of personal oral hygiene products are fundamental in the services we provide. Since starting the dental program, floating doctors has seen an improvement in the oral health of both children and adults due to improved access and regular reviews. However, over recent years refined sugar and sugar-containing products have become much more easily accessible to these populations and presents a significant problem, much like many parts of the western world. The aim of floating doctors is to continue with the services we currently provide, but most importantly to reiterate oral health education and preventative advice so that the positive effects of this dental program can be experienced by generations to come.

## Biography:

Hollie Hawrot graduated from The University of Sheffield dental school in 2016. She was born and lives in the United Kingdom. She is a member of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh after completing the MFDS in 2018. Hollie has completed her foundation training post, dental core training in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and most recently worked for Floating Doctors as a lead dental provider, which is a non-profit organisation based in Panama.