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Research Abstract

*The Other Face of Cuban Medical Diplomacy*

Since 1963 Cuba has provided medical assistance to third world countries while gaining international, political and economic support from its participating liaisons. But what exactly have been Cuba's domestic consequences of such medical diplomacy? While the Cuban government sends many of its medical professionals and supplies abroad, the country suffers from extreme scarcity and a deterioration of its healthcare system. The purpose of my research is to enquire more on the consequences of such medical diplomacy on the Cuban healthcare system and how it has affected domestic medical infrastructure, health professionals working on the island as well as the quality of service. In carrying out this examination, I will rely on the use of information from books written by Cuban medical professionals on their personal experiences within the medical system, and patients treated on the island. I will also make active use of academic journals and articles on the Cuban healthcare system. Most of what has been written on Cuban medical diplomacy and internationalist missions are favorable critiques praising the Cuban government. Nevertheless, personal testimonies found in Dr. Dessy Mendoza Rivero's *Dengue: La Epidemia Secreta de Fidel Castro* and in Dr. Jose Luis Comas and Dr. Luis Ovidio Gonzales' *Cuba: Medicina y Revolucion* reveal a different side to this seemingly pleasant and good natured international exchange. As a Cuban who lived on the island, I personally suffered the consequences of such medical diplomacy and believe others will find benefit in arming themselves with knowledge on the issue.