

Italian Navy Mission in Support of Medchild A.I.C. Vincenzo Martines

Abstract

On the 21st of October the 1805 the Battle of Trafalgar brought to the attention of the major naval powers the need to ensure quality health assistance on board of warfare ships because, as it is well known, the victory of England over the French-Spanish counterpart was marked by the death of Admiral Nelson.

The Hospital-ship concept was therefore shaped, and in Italy this concept today is appreciated again in consideration of the international role played by our country with the increase of commitments and missions of different type, ranging from peace-keeping to humanitarian assistance. In this new context we have to consider a specific mission, scientific and humanitarian, undertaken on November 2004 to Jamahiriya of Lybia. This mission has been realized through the joint cooperation of the Italian Navy and the Lybian Navy for the hyperbaric sector and thanks to MedChild commitment to promote the professional exchange and cooperation of Italian and Lybian doctors on pediatric assistance of excellence, with a vision for a wider Mediterranean cooperation.

This activity was made possible through the support of an Unit of the Italian Navy, San Marco Ship. Italian militar doctors, Gaslini's doctors and Lybian doctors met onboard of San Marco to discuss issues like hyperbaric oxigen-related problems or pediatric pathologies; even through the information and communication technologies made available on the Ship; everybody had the chance to express his or her opinion on real and meaningful cases. A memorandum of understanding between MedChild Foundation and the Lybian Medical Board marked the success of the initiative.

If the San Marco Ship contributed so determinantely to this mission, even because felt as a bridge between people, what we can expect if we could have always a ship entirely dedicated to the health assistance, especially for pediatric cases, for a permanent partnership of the Mediterranean countries? So here it is again the Hospital-ship (a floating Basilica as described by an author of the Italian Navy): a dream for any health inspector of the Navy, shared with MedChild friends, becoming an hoped reality from a dreamt dream.