



Global Health Education Student Experiences

Anya Golkowski

Drexel medical student Anya Golkowski in Ecuador with Child Family Health International Community Medicine.

Ecuador - Child Family Health International Community Medicine: From Rainforest to Coast Program
Summer 2016

"I spent the month of June completing the Child Family Health International Community Medicine: From Rainforest to Coast program. During the program, we worked closely with the Ministry of Public Health, gained clinical experience, and learned traditional medicine from a Shuar tribe.



"One of our priorities while working with the Ministry of Public Health was to understand how Ecuador conducts mosquito and mosquito-related diseases control. Our first task in the program was to work with a vector control brigade that went door to door in various communities examining water tanks, distributing larvacide and educating the community members. This experience proved to be extremely valuable for several reasons. I learned a tremendous amount about mosquitos and their significance as a major disease transmitting vector. I also challenged myself by providing some of the talks to the local community members about the symptoms of Zika, chikungunya, and dengue and to report any cases to the nearest clinic.

"During our clinical encounters, we were fortunate enough to become familiar with both urban and rural clinical settings. While there are differences in such settings in any country, I found the effects to be exaggerated in Ecuador. In comparison to urban areas, rural settings suffer from huge discrepancies in resources allocated to communities. For example, one clinic that was only 40 minutes away from a small city was supplied with almost all medications needed to treat the population. However, a clinic about an hour and a half away from the same small city did not even have multivitamins for children and had to settle for only supplementing vitamin A.



"Our traditional medicine experience was by far the most exciting. We began the journey by hiking almost 6 hours through rainforest to arrive at the Shuar tribe we had been invited to. Upon arrival, we learned that the same hike only takes a native Shuar 1 hour. During the hike I injured myself but was fortunate to receive traditional treatment from the head of the Shuar tribe (Gustavo). I was impressed with the level of caring with which he demonstrated throughout my stay. I had fallen on my wrist and Gustavo spent almost 30 minutes gently probing and manipulating my arm to assess what type of injury I had. Afterward he wrapped my wrist in an anti-inflammatory plant that had been smoked in coals. Although I was skeptical at first, Gustavo's manipulations and wrap proved to lessen the pain significantly. Having this experience made me more open minded towards the lessons on traditional medicine practices and medical plants we received the next day.

"Overall, my time spent in Ecuador was filled with so many interesting and challenging experiences that I could not do them justice in writing this essay. Originally, I had elected to spend my summer on the CFHI program because I wanted to improve my Spanish, gain clinical experience and explore my interests in global medicine. By the end of the program, I walked away with a newfound empathy for anyone trying to communicate anything in a second language, new friends, and a deeper understanding of how complex global health can be."



