



Global Health Education Student Experiences

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Sr. International Elective in Peru with The Network

April 2017

Before beginning my international experience, I had no idea what to expect. I had never visited Peru, let alone travel to a foreign country by myself. However, after completing my rotation, the experience was better than anything I could have ever expected.

I arrived in Trujillo, Peru, shortly after a series of flash floods due to El Niño had run through the city leaving many without electricity or running water. When my flight landed, much of the water and mud had dried covering many roads and sidewalks in dirt, which created a dust. For at least the first two weeks, many people, including myself, wore masks while in a car or walking around.

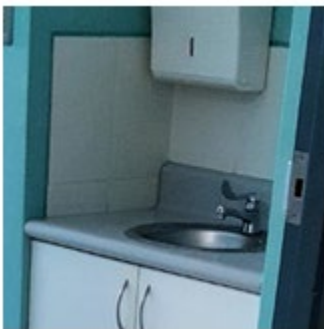


While in Trujillo, I stayed with a welcoming host family and had my own bedroom and bathroom on the third floor, also known as the roof. Luckily the street where my host family lived was spared from losing electricity or water, so I didn't have to experience life without it. The Medical Electives program set up my transportation to and from the hospital.



Hospital.Waiting.Room

During my daily ride to the hospital, I was joined by three other students—one from the US and two from the UK. Our hospital was located in the neighborhood of Esperanza, which throughout my stay was without water. Our cab driver was also from Esperanza and he taught us about Trujillo, his neighborhood, and what his life was like. I was the only foreign student on the internal medicine floor. During my first week, my team consisted of a local medical student in their last year, an orthodontic student, and a nutrition student, as well as the attending.



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From what I observed, it seemed like medical students were generally given more responsibility in Peru. After the first week, the teams changed and my team had a medicine resident, who did a lot of teaching, and an orthodontic student whose role was similar to what would be expected of an MS3, like writing medications down, etc. Rotating in a foreign hospital was overall a good experience because I was exposed to a different health care structure. Things weren't used as frivolously and older equipment was used, such as their EKG machine.

I would recommend Medical Electives to any other MS4 with a proficient understanding of Spanish in order to get the most out of the experience. The ability to live with a host family while rotating at the hospital helps integrate you into the community and allows you to understand more about the culture.

When I wasn't at the hospital, I had time to watch a Peruvian movie, visit pre-Incan and Incan ruins, and try all the delicious food including desserts while in Trujillo. This rotation was a great experience and it has helped increase my confidence when speaking Spanish with patients as well as reaffirmed my interest in pursuing an international elective during residency.

