

This summer I spent four weeks in Zaragoza, Spain. It was a wonderful experience, one that I am very fortunate to have had. Going to Spain allowed me to learn about the Spanish Healthcare System, get clinical exposure and improve my Spanish so that I am better able to serve my Spanish-speaking patients in the future.

The first two weeks I was in Zaragoza, I was at El Centro de Salud Arrabal. This is a healthcare office similar to those of our primary care physicians, except on a larger scale with around ten doctors. There I shadowed a pediatrician, Dr. Maria Jose Olmedillas. In the mornings we saw children for sick visits and then in the early afternoon we did well child checkups. While I did see a lot of bad colds and strep throat, we did have some more out of the ordinary cases from which I was able to learn a lot. This time I spent with Dr Olmedillas was also very helpful in solidifying my knowledge of the well child checkup.

During the next week I was able to go to Hospital Miguel Servet, which is the largest hospital in Zaragoza, and the only one with a true children's hospital. There I shadowed residents in the pediatric emergency room. This was very interesting due to the variety of cases that came in. Many of the residents were first years who had only started a few weeks earlier, so it was a really good time to be there because there was a lot of teaching happening. The attending held mini-lectures in her office on commonly encountered emergency room complications and we even had performed a simulation of a child going into respiratory arrest using a doll model. I was also able to serve as a translator for a Czech mother who did not speak Spanish, as very few people in Zaragoza speak English.

In my final week I was in the psych ward at Miguel Servet. This was quite an eye-opening experience for me, as I have never had the opportunity to be in this clinical setting before. Having seen the interactions between these patients and their doctors, and getting the chance to speak with these patients myself, I believe I will be able to have a much greater appreciation for the psychological disturbances we are going to learn about this year. It is truly amazing the distorted views one can have when there are slight disturbances in the brain.

Because most doctors only work until around two or three in the afternoon, I had the later afternoon and evenings to explore Zaragoza. Zaragoza is the fifth largest city in Spain and has much to offer. It houses the largest river aquarium in Europe, magnificent churches, scenic parks and some gorgeous architecture. We spent much time just walking around and soaking up the city, in addition to discovering some delicious restaurants. On the weekends we traveled around Spain, visiting Barcelona, Madrid and Pamplona, all of which were amazing.

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