

Robert Gemignani
Zaragoza Spain Clinical Internship:

This program has many unique experiences and opportunities that many of the other global health programs do not offer. This was my main reason for choosing this program and why I think it was such a great experience for me.

To start, this program was highly clinically based. First year of medical school may not always provide you with enough clinical practice to prepare you for the years to come. In Zaragoza, I was able to get a taste of things to come. I spent every day during the week in the office of a primary care physician in the Actur Sur region of Zaragoza. Here I was part of a team made up of a doctor, resident, and nurse. I was provided with innumerable amounts of clinical tips and given valuable time to practice my physical exam skills. As a matter of fact, everything that the doctor and resident did, I did too. I was also able to go on house calls and to national medical conferences. It was an excellent way to prepare me for things to come.

Next, this program was really about cultural immersion. Many programs you see are very structured, secluded, and classroom heavy. Zaragoza is different. After my day of work, I was free to explore the city. I lived in an apartment in the heart of the city as a temporary resident of the city. I went out to eat where the locals did, I went to the soccer stadium to be a part an important match, relaxed in the many parks of Zaragoza, on the weekends enjoyed the nightlife, and I explored the Roman history of this old and beautiful city. There were no classes, lessons, or school work to do. I was truly a part of the city.

Finally, Zaragoza is not a poor city. It is wealthy and industrialized and was home to the World Expo 2008. Many students take trips to places where healthcare is scarce or inaccessible for a variety of reasons. This is not the case here. It was a chance to look at how one of the best healthcare systems in the world operates. Universal healthcare in Spain is effective and well-regarded. This experience allowed me to see how it operates and all the positives and negatives it brings with it. Hopefully, all of us in this program can bring a little something back to this country to improve our own healthcare system, whether it be on an individual basis or on a larger scale.









