

# A Global Health Summer in Zaragoza, Spain

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## Summer Abroad

The University of Zaragoza, School of Medicine hosted us for a 4-week hospital immersion program.

### My Objectives:

- Practice physical exam skills
- Explore various medical specialties
- Enhance medical Spanish proficiency
- Broaden cultural competency/ humility

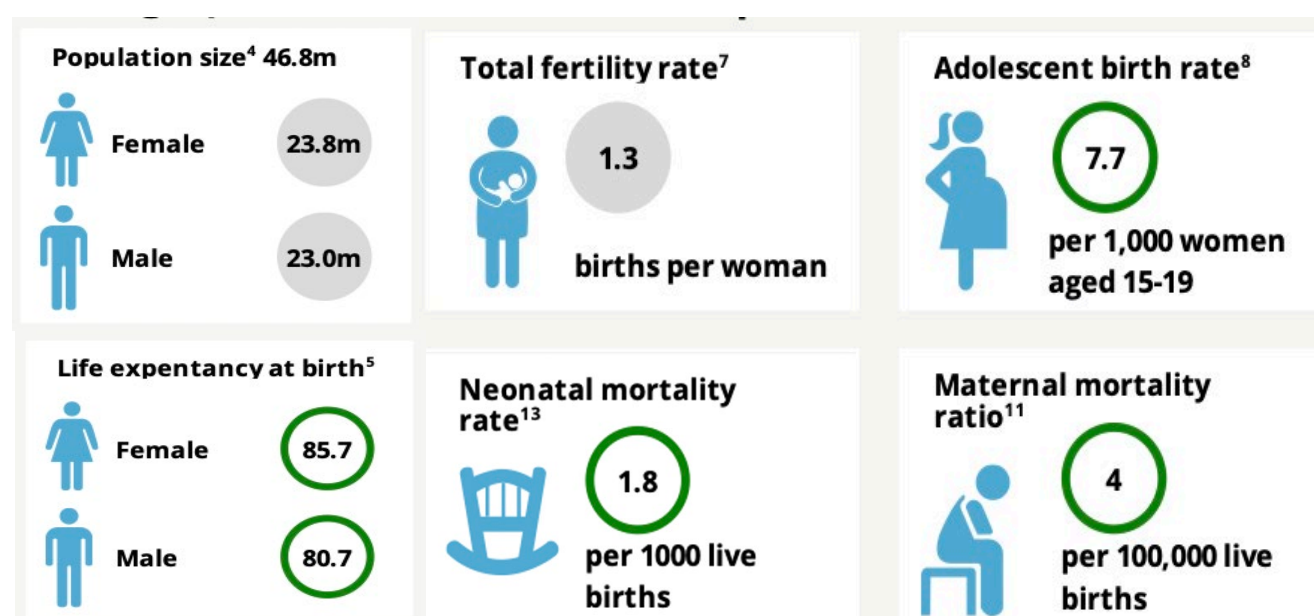
## Zaragoza, Aragon, Spain

- Population: 666,880 (2018)
- Official Language: Spanish
- UNESCO Heritage Sites:
  - Cathedral of La Seo del Salvador
  - Nuestra Senora del Pilar Cathedral
  - Mudéjar architecture of Aragon
  - Roman Baths of Caesaraugusta
  - Aljafería Palace



## Healthcare in Spain

- Population: 47,615,034 (2020)
- Universal Healthcare, paid by Taxes. Known as the National Health System (Sistema Nacional de Salud, SNS).
- Health spending % of GDP: 9.1%
- Life expectancy: 85.7 years (Female) and 80.7 years (Male)
- Relative poverty rate: 20.7% (2020)
- In 2019, 0.2% of the population reported unmet medical needs due to cost, distance, or wait time.



## Family Medicine Clinic – Centro de Salud Arrabal

- Shadowed family medicine doctor and resident during patient visits. They gave us insight into the Spanish medical education system and the Spanish healthcare system.
- In comparison to the US, Spain has a universal healthcare system (SNS) which is regarded as a public service. Patients are assigned a local clinic and family doctor, emphasizing the importance of continuity of care. Nurses have their own office and play a vital role in routine testing and patient care. Spain does not have a strong referral culture.
- Residents ran the skin clinic. Patients presented with various skin concerns (skin tags, fibromas, warts, etc.). We assisted with cryotherapy and the electrical surgical scalpel.

## Rural Medicine Clinic – Catalyud, Miedes, and Ruesca

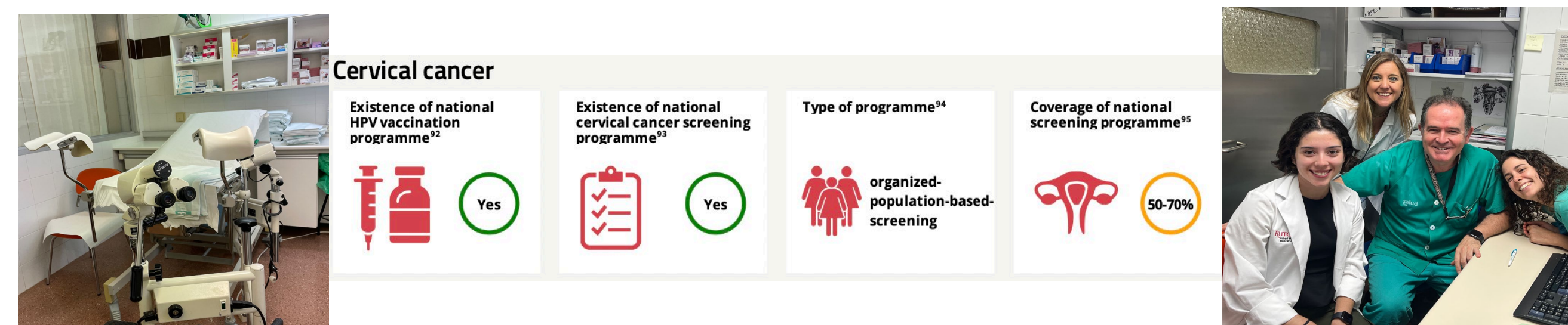
- We shadowed Dr. Marta Miedes, the family medicine doctor assigned to the surrounding farming pueblos of Miedes and Ruesca (combined population of 500).
- Older patient population with knee/hip pain, arthritis, and diabetes.
- We did a house visit for a 90-yr old M with Alzheimer's disease for wound care of multiple bed sores.

- During cultivating season, Romanian immigrants work at farms. Immigrants living in Spain >3 mos. have access to care.



## OB/GYN Department – Hospital Clinico Universitario Lozano Blesa

- Everyday, I shadowed a different doctor in various clinics within the department: Obstetrics Clinic, Hysteroscopy Clinic, Endometriosis Clinic, Infertility Clinic, Breast Clinic, Cervical Pathology Clinic, ECHO Clinic, and scheduled C-sections.
- *Infertility Clinic*: SNS covers pregnancy care, infertility consultations, 4-6 cycles of insemination, sperm and ovary donation, and IVF for women <40 yrs. and <32 BMI.
- *Breast Clinic*: National breast cancer screening program. SNS covers transgender care, hormone replacement, and chest masculinization reconstruction.
- *Cervical Pathology Clinic*: National cervical cancer screening done by nurses. SNS covers HPV vaccine only for 12 to 13-year-olds, or during an active HPV infection.
- *Clinical skills gained*: Used a transvaginal ultrasound to visualize the uterus, bladder and ovaries, and to identify the trilaminar endometrium; detected the heartbeat of an 8-week fetus via ultrasound; inserted a speculum; preformed a manual pelvic exam and breast exam.
- *Procedures observed*: transvaginal ultrasound, ECHO, hysteroscopy, insemination, colposcopy, C-section, mastitis drainage, and hysterosalpingography.



## Extracurricular Learning:

- Traveling the country on the weekends
  - Majorca via airplane departed from Zaragoza Airport
  - Barcelona & Madrid via highspeed train
- Local town festivals on the weekends (Pamplona, Jaca, Huesca, Bilbao, San Sebastian & Calatayud)
- Weekdays:
  - 8 am – 2 pm: Clinic
  - 2 pm – 5 pm: Siesta
  - 5 pm – 7 pm: Dinner
  - 7 pm – 9 pm: Art class
- Transportation:
  - Light rail
  - Bus
  - High-speed train
  - Airplane



## Contact Information for Program:

- Visit the RWJMS Global Health Website for more information.
- Spain contact person: Dra. Rosa Magallon

## Conclusion:

I highly recommend this hands-on hospital immersion program for medical students. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to live in Spain for 4 weeks, travel around the country, explore medical specialties of your choosing, and practice your medical and conversational Spanish.

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## References:

- European Health Observatory: Spain Country Health Profile 2021
- WHO Spain: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Infographic Snapshot 2021
- World Bank: Spain – Population Total