

## International Elective in Trujillo, Peru

Trujillo, Peru is located in the northern part of the country, west of the Andes Mts. on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. It is Peru's third largest city and a home to Universidad Nacional de Trujillo (which has a medical school) and Hospital Regional. Hospital Regional is a large medical center that provides health care to Peruvians living throughout the northern part of the country. The hospital has an active emergency department, general and subspecialty outpatient services, as well as, inpatient services in OB-Gyn, surgery, internal medicine and pediatrics. Dr. Moises Barrantes Cabrera, the dean of the medical school, is a rheumatologist at Hospital Regional. He is a kind and well respected faculty member who is eager to provide quality learning experiences for medical students visiting Trujillo.

For our experience, we chose to work in several different areas of the hospital. We began in the ophthalmology department, sitting in on outpatient patient appointments and observing surgeries. The attendings and residents provided us with some teaching. Common patient problems range from eye trauma and conjunctivitis to ruling out retinoblastoma. The surgeries we observed included detached retina repair, lens replacement surgery, and cataract removal.

Next, we spent time in the Dermatology department, working with a wonderful dermatologist Dra. Jenny Valverde. In her outpatient clinic we saw a wide variety of pathology, reflecting the diversity of dermatologic problems found in tropical parts of the world. Dra. Valverde taught us much about these diseases and provided us with text books and current literature (in English!) to aid us in our studies. The following is a partial list of the dermatologic diseases we saw: atopic dermatitis, sporotrichosis, leishmaniasis, alopecia totalis, dyshidrosis, dermatologic actinomyces, tinea cruris, tinea capitis, tinea corporis, pityriasis alba, trichotillomania, molluscum contagiosum, vitiligo, lymphogranuloma venerium, r/o dermal TB, melasma.

We spent the last part of our trip working in the emergency department. We worked with a team of residents who were very patient with our Spanish, and very eager to teach us both medicine and language skills. Because our focus is internal medicine we spent time in the medicine area of the ED. There are separate medicine, pediatric, surgical, and OB areas in the ED. Our responsibilities included taking histories and performing physical exams on new patients, presenting cases to residents and attendings, and discussing therapeutic options. The following are some of the cases we saw: gastroenteritis, sciatica, UTI with urosepsis, organophosphate ingestion, cholelithiasis, salmonella typhi, appendicitis, asthma, fever of unknown origin, TB, herpes zoster.

We enthusiastically recommend this elective to anyone who is looking for an international experience with the following objectives:

- To have a clinically-based, educational experience in the field of adult medicine
- To develop an understanding of the clinical aspects of healthcare in a developing country
- To improve Spanish language skills, as well as, basic skills in diagnosis and management of medical disorders
- To gain knowledge of the health issues most important to the people of Peru

These were our objectives and we were very pleased with our experience. It is one that we will never forget. We do feel that it is important to mention that only a few doctors and even fewer patients at the hospital speak English. Therefore, we feel that the experience would not be as valuable to a student unable to speak Spanish at a conversational level. Most everyone we met throughout our stay was very friendly and helpful, especially the physicians at the hospital. If you are interested in such an elective contact Dr. Hugo Montenegro in the Pulmonology Department at UH or e-mail Dr. Barrantes directly at [decano@ots.com.pe](mailto:decano@ots.com.pe) Dr. Barrantes is a very busy man and so it is best to contact him early on in the planning stages of your trip. Best of luck and thanks to Dr. Daniel, Dr. Kazura, and April Rodon in the Department of International Health for all of your help and support.

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