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Elective placement in 2 contrasting Health Care Centres in Mexico City

Summary

I am a 3rd year STP trainee in Clinical Microbiology, based at Southmead Hospital, Bristol.

I decided to do my elective placement in Mexico City in September 2016, to learn how Clinical Microbiology Laboratories in Mexico compare to those in the UK; while visiting my family and having free childcare provided by the Grandparents!

I was particularly interested to learn the diagnosis and management of infections that are rare in the UK, but common in Mexico (e.g. fungal infections); and how infections endemic in both countries (e.g. tuberculosis) are diagnosed and managed in a country with limited resources.

I visited the Mycology Department of the General Hospital “Dr Manuel Gea González”, a small and underfunded public hospital in Mexico City. The different activities I performed ranged from shadowing private clinics, where I saw rare and dramatic skin, hair and nail fungal infections in patients from all over the country to identifying fungi and yeasts based solely on their microscopic characteristics –what a challenge!

I also visited “The National Institute of Medical Science and Nutrition Salvador Zubirán (INCMNSZ)”, among Mexico’s most prestigious medical and research hospitals. The Clinical Microbiology Laboratory is modern and well equipped and process local and referred specimens from all over the country for the diagnosis of tuberculosis. It is subject to rigorous quality control evaluations by U.S. accreditation bodies. I performed all the tests involved in the diagnosis of tuberculosis and learned about patient management in a well resourced clinical setting.

Overall it was a fantastic experience!