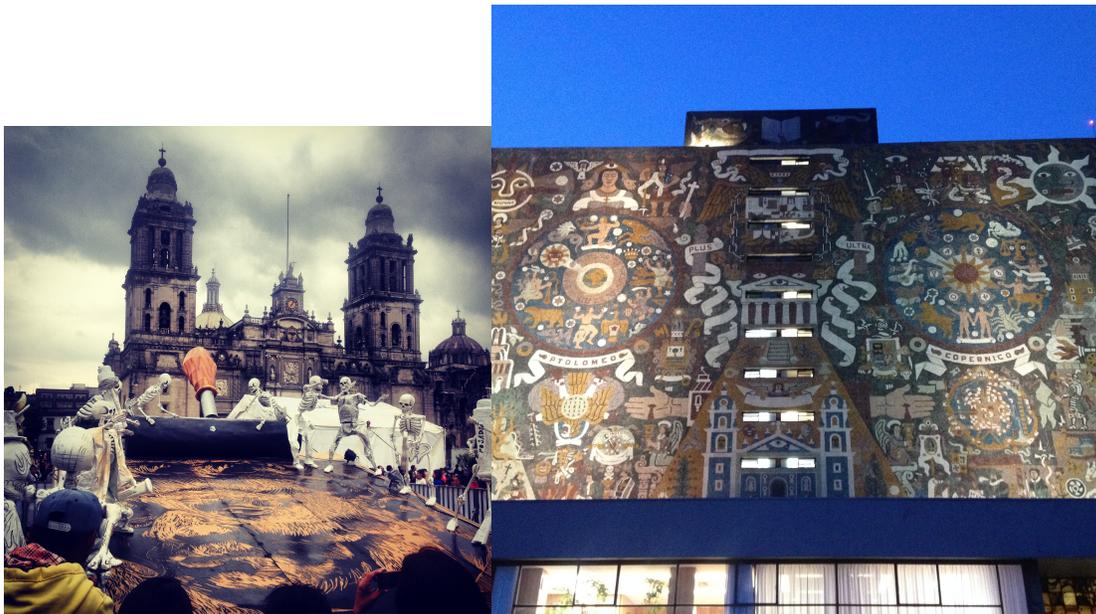


I was a visiting Fourth Year Medical Student from the University of Minnesota studying at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. On arrival, I spoke minimal Spanish. I arranged for my rotations to be at the Instituto Nacional de Nutricion y Ciencias Medicas Salvador Zubiran (INNSZ). I also was able to find a Spanish teacher and arranged for private, one hour lessons 3-5 days per week depending on availability. These cost 100 pesos per hour. I found an apartment in the Escandon area of the city, about 1 hour by Metrobus from the hospital. This location was helpful during times when I wasn't working, because of its central location, walkability, and access to Metro, Metrobus, and Ecobici. The commute was long, however not unbearable. It was also helpful that hours for rotations were fairly light. On average I would arrive at 7 am to see patients with the residents. The revision with attending physicians was at 9 and went until about noon. Then there was usually conferences, after which I was free to work on research, study Spanish, or do tourist-type things around town.



On arrival, I started rotations in the Department of Nephrology. I was paired with a resident who spoke some English which was helpful initially. I rotated through outpatient dialysis, inpatient Nephrology, Emergency and Intensive Care Nephrology, General Internal Medicine, and HIV clinic throughout my stay. I also started immediately with research, of which there is a lot of opportunity at this hospital. I started by translating things between English and Spanish. I started writing manuscripts, and performing data collection through chart review. I wrote an IRB application for a large study that should be starting soon. This work has resulted in 2 posters, and several pending publications. I feel that this will be very helpful in applying to Internal Medicine Residency.



I found the quality of education and medical care at the hospital top notch. There was a real sense of teamwork and collegiality between all of the residents and the staff. The residents and students were treated with the utmost respect by the attending physicians. Work hours were more than fair. I was able to work less at the onset so that I could focus on Spanish language and 'catch up' in my ability to communicate with patients and coworkers. The residents let me see and talk to patients as much as I felt comfortable and did not push me too hard.



Culturally, Mexico had a lot to offer including food, music, museums, history, celebrations, holidays, and many locations to visit. I took full advantage of Mexico City's central location and ease of traveling to the rest of the country from there. I was able to visit Tabasco, Quintana Roo, Veracruz, Morelos, Guerrero, Jalisco, Puebla, Chiapas, and Queretaro during my stay in Mexico. I ate liberally in the streets and in restaurants without ever getting sick. I never encountered any problems in my entire stay (no crime, no violence, nothing).

Towards the end of my trip, I was able to take an exam offered through UNAM to demonstrate my ability to speak Spanish. The exam is offered through the Centro de Enseñanza para Extranjeros. It is offered in 3 levels (Basic, advanced, and dominance). I chose to take the Advanced level exam and passed. I thought that this was helpful and offers proof that I learned Spanish to a very functional level in my short time in Mexico. I don't think this rapid advancement would have been possible had I tried to learn Spanish here in the United States of America.

In summary, in 10 months in Mexico, I learned the Spanish language to an 'advanced level' as judged by UNAM, experienced medicine in another country, performed a lot of research which has already resulted in 2 posters and will certainly be published, met lifelong friends and

colleagues, and experienced the life and culture of Mexico. This was an amazing and worthwhile experience that I will surely recommend to other students from my school.