

Observing Health Education and Preventive Care Practices In Tarija, Bolivia

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Background

I participated in the Child Family Health International (CFHI) program to gain a deeper understanding of global healthcare systems.

The Single Health System mode (SUS)

- Private and public sectors (2,3)
- Universal and free health coverage for all Bolivian citizens
- Strengthened primary health services and increased health exposure (4)
- Insufficient resources, creating long wait times, and a shortage of medicine

Bono Madre

- A conditional cash transfer program aimed to reduce maternal and infant mortality (5)
- Prenatal and postnatal compensated checkup appointments from pregnancy until the child is 2 years old

Health Education

- Teaching children and adults proper hygiene and nutrition
- Support for lactation

Preventative care

- Vaccinations, Supplements, and Checkup Appointments

Methods

On-campus prep course

Learned about global public health, particularly aspects of the healthcare system in Bolivia

Primary Clinic Posta de Salud

Observed family physicians provide consults, health fair, rastrijale (vaccine screening)

Tertiary Hospital, San Juan de Dios

Observed physician perform consults from the urology and obstetrics department

Tertiary hospital, San Juan de Dios

Observed surgeries from various rotations- Urology, cardio, pediatrics, and OBGYN



Figure 1. Rastrijale Vaccination Screening

Walked around the outskirts of town vaccinating children under 5



Figure 2. Charge nurse, nursing students, Layla and I, at the end of the Rastrijale

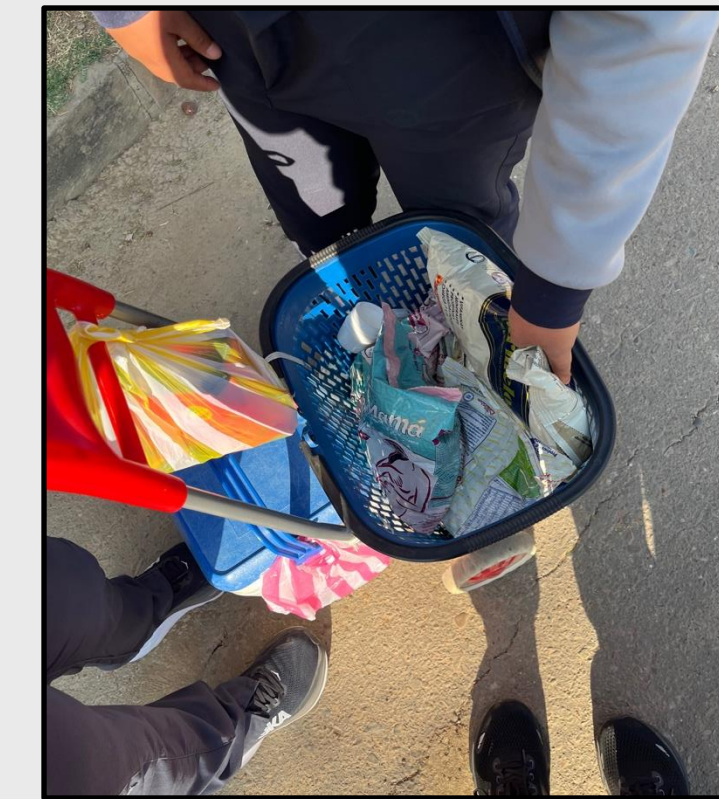


Figure 3. Rastrijale Ice Chest and Cart
Supplements distributed to breastfeeding mothers, infants, and elders.



Figure 4. Nutrition Education at the Health fair

Nursing staff and fruit cups they prepared.



Figure 5. Nursing Students Educating Children About Lactation



Figure 6. Interactive Dental Model
The dentist demonstrated proper dental hygiene to community members.



Figure 7. Flyer About Bono Madre
Application steps for government assistance program



Figure 8. Mural: The smallest action is better than the greatest intention



Figure 9. Layla and I after observing a urologist perform surgery

Results

Health education and preventative care are essential for good health and well-being (1)

Health accessibility

- Government support makes a positive impact on infant and mother outcomes (5)
- Care provided to families with limited access (2)
- Health fairs hosted by the team to educate the community made a positive impact (6)

Health Stigmas

- Outreach events contribute to breaking stigmas and providing medical care to indigenous communities (6,7)

Implications

My study abroad experience was invaluable. The Physicians I observed taught me the importance of compassion and collaboration. The team sought to understand the entirety of the patient and provide quality care. This adventure solidified my desire and passion for pursuing a career as a physician. Each day I shadowed, I learned something new and admired the impact each physician made on their patient. I aspire to be a physician like them, a hard-working, caring, culturally competent physician.

Acknowledgments

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References

