

Hippocrates Exchange Programme

Final Report

Name of Visitor: Xavier FIGUERAS ALMORIL

Email of Visitor: 34608xfa@comb.cat

Country of Visitor: SPAIN

Name of Visitor's National Exchange Coordinator: Virginia HERNANDEZ SANTIAGO

Email of Visitor's National Exchange Coordinator: hippokratesspain@gmail.com

Name of Host: Malcolm McLean

Email of Host: malcolm.mclean@nhs.net

Country of Host: UK

Name of Host's National Exchange Coordinator: Madeleine Ginns

Email of Host's National Exchange Coordinator: madeleine.jic@gmail.com

Dates the Exchange took place:

From 10/5/10 to 21/5/10

Report of my Hippocrates Exchange Experience

Last 25 May 2010 I finished my training as a GP. One of my training objectives when I started was to visit the UK as part of an exchange programme, because I wanted to know how the NHS worked so, finally, this month I have been in the UK for two weeks. And I have been lucky because I was in the countryside, where the landscape is really beautiful and the weather, surprisingly, was wonderful.

What was especially interesting about my experience and also worth reporting, I think, were the differences that I came across between the English and Spanish systems. First of all, I think that in the UK people are very polite in general, and there is still respect for doctors, and patients do not protest if the doctor does not give them a prescription.

I was also amazed because everybody tries to visit the patients on time, doctors and all staff in general have a great respect for patients, and because the number of interruptions while the GP is visiting is very low.

It is important too, I think, what nurses do, because they are in charge of the follow-up of patients' chronic diseases, such as asthma, diabetes, heart failure and so on, the triage in emergency cases, and the management of phone calls. This means that doctors have fewer visits to attend to, so they can offer a better service to patients and be more relaxed because they have more time. I would like to point this out because in my country, phone calls and other interruptions are very common, and often a cause of annoyed and one more

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reason for longer waiting-times, together with the long lists of patients with short visiting-times for each one.

In any case, in general, I think that it has been a good experience, maybe a bit difficult to apply in my country because of the Spanish system and manners, but a good example to follow with the aim of improving the Health Service.

Xavier FIGUERAS ALMORIL

5th June 2010

