

# Hippokrates Exchange Programme

## Final Report

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### Report of my Hippokrates Exchange Experience:

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**Dates the Exchange took place:** From 15<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011, in addition to the attending to some national GP events in Switzerland in my own holidays period.

The beginning was an approach to the Swiss health system structure, in this case this is a system based in private practice (the opposite of the Spanish public one). Primary care is done in small centers with 1 to 10 professionals. These centers may have GP, other medical specialists in other areas, nutritionists, naturopaths, psychologists, physiotherapists, nurses and assistants, some of them have their own pharmacy, laboratory and emergency room. Health insurance covers all or part of patient care in direct relation to the annual amount. Depending on the insurance the patient has to pay in advance or not, consultation and medicines. Each visit spend a minimum of 20 minutes, the daily dealing with the patient is much closer, with one advantage, generally the patients require fewer number of visits. There are some differences in the treatment of some diseases, they use to include therapies unknown to me until this moment that complement the action of drugs: light therapy to treat seasonal affective disorders, the Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing to complete the drug treatment of patients with post-traumatic stress disorders... These types of therapies are included too in recognized centers like Mayo Clinic.

I also visited the preventive medicine unit at hospital, and the vaccination programs. The duration of each appointment in this case is usually 30-45 minutes, explaining to the patient every prophylactic step attaching documents with information about the benefits and adverse effects of each vaccine and prophylactic treatment. Special emphasis is done on travelers: Tips

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for traveling alone, woman traveling, trips to tropical areas, by plane, advises to the mountaineers, divers and children. We must remember that the Swiss are great travelers, hikers and boaters (although they do not have sea). The mandatory vaccinations are covered by the insurances; in case of voluntary vaccinations, as traveler prophylaxis, is the patient who covers the cost of the consultation and treatment.

Regardless of a different structure of our health care systems, both have common problems. I had the opportunity to attend at the first national congress for young family physicians in Solothurn, and to the family doctors demonstration in Berne; both were very rewarding experiences. Their main problem is the lack of recognition of the great value that represents the work of the family doctor. Only a third of all physicians are GP, it seems as an inverted pyramid of social needs and that they want to change it. They also want to convince the government about the problem they have to cover rural areas.



Their emergency system is very similar to the Spanish, with a phone number that delivers emergency ambulance services, home visits or solve simple problems answering the patients questions by telephone. I had the opportunity to live the experience with them in an active call center, I have to say that I am very lucky having the Dr Decrey as a trainer, she is the emergency coordinator and the GP president in our area, she is a very active doctor to achieve improvements in their health system.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> National Congress of the youth family physicians, they made special emphasis on the need for a bigger number of family physicians, assess the work, planning the training of medical residents with a future mandatory step towards primary care, the mental doctors health protection at work, home care ... and many other issues, all of them interesting. The post graduated program for GP is not fixed, is related with the necessities in each canton, at least is more flexible than



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our program. It consisted in 5 years, 2.5 at hospital services and the rest of the time depending of the interests of each physician, they are free where and when they want to continue their training.

Attending to this national meeting I had a great opportunity to interact with others trainees and young GPs and interchange opinions about the possibilities to improve our health system. I too had the possibility to be an observer trainee with different GP, one of them Spanish who is working here, each one of them is a little bit sub-specialized in a different health area.

The main lesson I have receive is how they protect their health system and the professionals against the overbooking, avoiding the burn out, not only for the physicians, they apply this rule for every worker. They can obtain a reduction in the percentage of working hours from 10 to 100% related with stress situations or to take care of their families. And they preserve a good quality of consultations with a minimum time of 20 minutes per patient, it can be longer if it is necessary.



The maximum working hour for a trainee are 50 per week by law, avoiding the professional fatigue and bringing them time to study. They relate a good health with a good quality of life and work. So perhaps we can also, as far as possible, improve our quality of care avoiding stress and fight for more time to each patient care.

I really have enjoyed every one of these work and personal experiences, I highly recommend this turn-out to trainees and young GP from all over Europe.

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