

GILEAD EXCHANGE SCHOLARSHIPS in collaboration with BHIVA

Exchange scholarships to Argentina 2014

Report from **Chris O Durojaiy**

Activities

I arrived in Buenos Aires on 16 November 2014. On the first day of my two-week placement, I was warmly received by my hosts at Helios Salud SA, Perú 1515. Helios Salud is a specialist HIV outpatient clinic in Buenos Aires.



**Helios Salud SA, Perú 1515
Buenos Aires**

During the exchange I also visited the following centres:

- **Hospital de Infecciosas 'F. Muñiz'** (Muniz Hospital): a public hospital dedicated to the management of infectious diseases.



**Hospital de Infecciosas 'F. Muñiz'
Uspallata 2272, Buenos Aires**

- **Stamboulian Laboratorio:** the largest privately funded medical laboratory in Buenos Aires.



Stamboulian Servicios De Salud
Avenida Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz 696
Villa Crespo, Buenos Aires

My programme for the exchange visit

Week	Day	Activities
1	1	HIV Clinic at Helios Salud SA
	2	HIV Clinic at Helios Salud SA
	3	Hepatology Clinic at Hospital de Infecciosas 'F. Muñiz'
	4	Travel clinic at Hospital de Infecciosas 'F. Muñiz'
	5	HIV Clinic at Helios Salud SA
	6	REST (Saturday)
	7	REST (Sunday)
2	8	PUBLIC HOLIDAY (National Sovereignty Day)
	9	HIV Clinic at Helios Salud SA
	10	Zoonotic Diseases Clinic at Hospital de Infecciosas "F. Muñiz"
	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel clinic at Hospital de Infecciosas 'F. Muñiz' • Laboratory visit: Stamboulian Laboratorio
	12	HIV Clinic at Helios Salud SA
	13	DEPARTURE

HIV clinic

The adult prevalence rate of HIV in Argentina is 0.4%. An estimated 98,000 people are living with HIV in Argentina. I saw a number of HIV patients at Helios Salud. The doctors were very friendly and very accommodating. They all speak English in addition to Spanish. Unlike in the UK, antiretroviral therapies are initiated earlier when the CD4 cell count falls to 500 cells/mm³. I also attended and contributed to the daily multidisciplinary teams where complex HIV cases were discussed.



**A consulting room at Helios Salud SA,
Perú 1515, Buenos Aires**

Hepatology unit

I attended the hepatology clinic at the Hospital for Infectious diseases 'F. Muñiz' (Muñiz Hospital). I was surprised to see a FibroScan and an ultrasound scan in the clinic. I learned about their positive clinical experiences with pegylated interferon in the treating chronic hepatitis B infections. I also attended one inpatient ward round. The unit has 15 inpatient beds.



**Inpatient ward at the Hepatology unit,
Muñiz Hospital, Uspallata 2272, Buenos Aires**

Travel clinic

I attended the travel clinic at Muñiz Hospital twice. The clinic provides a range of services, support and advice to people who intend to travel outside Argentina. The clinic also offers vaccinations and prophylactic medications including antimalarials. To my surprise, Malarone (atovaquone/proguanil) is not available in Argentina.

Zoonotic diseases clinic

I encountered some interesting tropical diseases in the Zoonotic diseases clinic at Muñiz Hospital. I saw cases of hydatid disease (echinococcosis), leptospirosis and brucellosis. There was a recent outbreak of brucellosis among slaughterhouse workers in Buenos Aires. I also learned about their clinical experiences in managing psittacosis, dengue fever, chikungunya, and Chagas disease (American trypanosomiasis). I did not see a case of Chagas as it is rarely seen in Buenos Aires although it is endemic in the rural areas.



**Reduviid bugs:
vectors of Chagas disease**

Laboratory visit

Stamboulia Laboratorio is the largest privately funded medical laboratory in Buenos Aires. It is the reference laboratory for molecular diagnostic tests. I visited the microbiology and virology units of the laboratory. I observed how HIV viral load and genotypic resistance testing are carried out.



**Microbiology Lab, Stamboulia Servicios De Salud
Avenida Raúl Scalabrini Ortiz 696
Villa Crespo, Buenos Aires**

Other activities

Buenos Aires is the capital and largest city of Argentina, and the second-largest metropolitan area in South America (after Greater São Paulo). Buenos Aires is a top tourist destination; it is known for its European-style architecture and rich cultural life.

During my rest days and the public holiday (National Sovereignty Day), I visited some interesting places and landmarks: La Boca (the old port district and home of world renowned football club Boca Juniors); Puerto Madero (the city's newest neighbourhood with a modern skyline); Buenos Aires Ecological Reserve; and the Pirámide de Mayo (the oldest national monument in Buenos Aires).



Buenos Aires Ecological Reserve



Pirámide de Mayo

Experience gained

I gained some valuable experience in the management of infectious diseases that are rarely seen in the UK as well as experience in the treatment and management of brucellosis, dengue fever and hydatid disease. I hope to apply my newly acquired knowledge in my clinical practice to improve patient care and outcomes. I will share my experience and knowledge with my colleagues via presentations in local meetings. I also learnt some Spanish words and phrases.

Networking and collaboration

The programme gave me the opportunity to interact, exchange ideas and share experience in control and management of a number of infectious diseases with colleagues from Argentina. I made some new friends and I intend to set up a long-term collaboration with my Argentine colleagues to share ideas and knowledge in the field of infectious diseases.

Challenges

Argentina is predominantly a Spanish-speaking country and most of the patients I saw did not speak English. Luckily, all the doctors I met did speak English in addition to Spanish and were very helpful.

Recommendations

I highly recommend this exchange scholarship programme to any infectious diseases trainee who wishes to improve his/her knowledge of management of infectious diseases overseas. Although not essential, I would recommend (that) future awardees have some knowledge of the Spanish language.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Gilead and BHIVA for giving me this unique opportunity to visit Argentina. I would also like to thank Dr Isabel Cassetti for hosting me in Buenos Aires, and all the wonderful doctors and staff I met at Helios Salud, Muñiz Hospital and Stamboulian Laboratorio.

'Muchas gracias'.