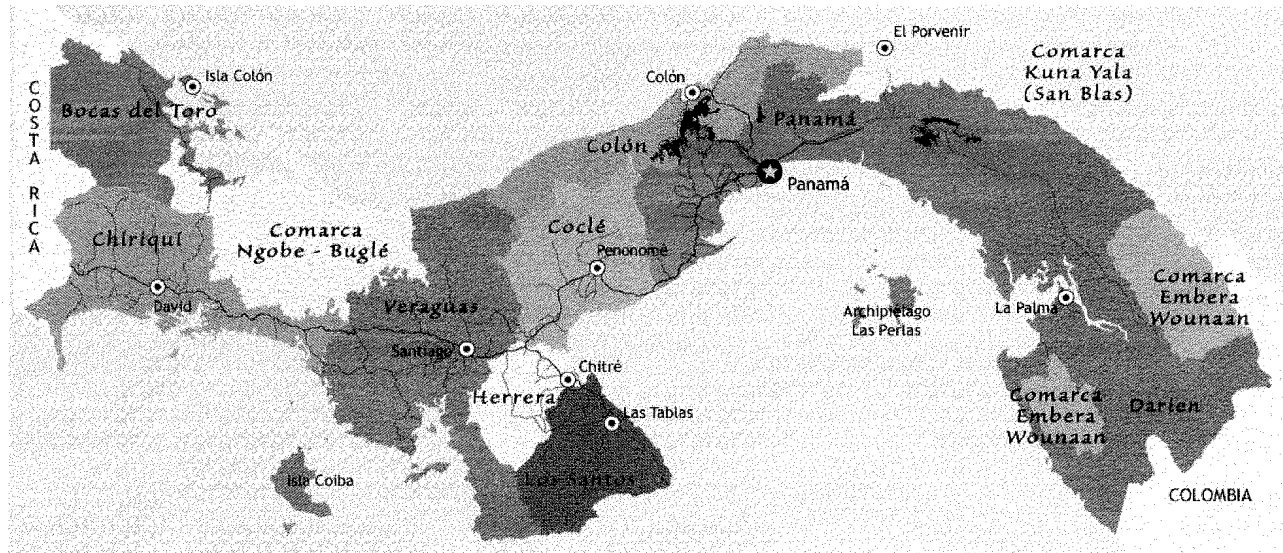


PROPOSED M4 ELECTIVES IN PANAMA

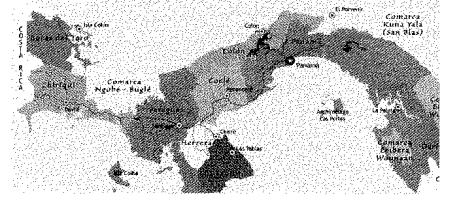


Introduction

As part of an effort by the University of Michigan Medical School's Global REACH program, I traveled to Panama July 5–25, 2011 to investigate opportunities for M4 clinical electives. After landing in Panama City, I traveled to David to meet with Dr. Newton Osborne, the Panamanian physician who trained at U of M. I spent the first 9 days traveling to local clinics with him to meet with their medical directors. During this time, I spent a significant amount of time at the hospital he works at, Hospital Materno-Infantil Jose Domingo de Obaldia, to assess their learning and practice environment, meet with hospital officials, and talk with obstetrics and pediatrics residents. Based on my experience, this hospital is an excellent center to host US medical students for several reasons: (1) Diverse pathology and advanced cases, (2) Opportunities for direct patient care and hands-on procedural learning, (3) A structured learning environment for residents, and (4) High patient volume with a manageable number of trainees.

After leaving David, I traveled to San Felix to visit a rural hospital that serves the indigenous Ngobe Bugle region. Unfortunately, the medical director had a death in the family and was unable to meet with me to discuss. Nonetheless, the educational director at Hospital Materno-Infantil Jose Domingo de Obaldia suggested Hospital San Felix as an excellent opportunity for visiting students who desire an outpatient experience.

In regards to Spanish language level, Hema and I agree that students should have an advanced command of the language in order to communicate with patients, or their opportunities to be involved in direct patient care are limited. However, if the student is content with more shadowing, a low- to intermediate level of Spanish is acceptable.



Obstetrics in Panama

Primary contact: Dr. Alcibiades Bautista, head of resident education (*jefe de docencia*)

→ Tel (507) 775-4862, cell 6220-0207, jefe_docencia@yahoo.es.

Secondary contact: Dr. Newton Osborne, attending physician and UMMS alum.

→ Cell 6611-3305, newtonosborne@aol.com

Course description: The student will function as a sub-intern on the inpatient obstetrical service of a high-volume hospital in David, Panama. The student will develop skills to properly manage normal and abnormal labor and to perform common intrapartum procedures. The 12-bed labor unit houses women in active labor in 2 different rooms. Beds are wheeled to one of 5 delivery rooms (*salas de expulsión*) when delivery is imminent. Three obstetrics residents manage the service. Students will also have the opportunity to evaluate patients in triage (*sala de urgencias*) and care for postpartum patients. It is possible to visit or rotate in Hospital San Felix, a nearby rural hospital that serves the local indigenous population. The rotation can be tailored to the student's interests. For example, the student may spend one week in triage, one week on the labor-delivery service, one week in the postpartum ward, and one week in clinic and visiting the Hospital San Felix. Dr. Newton Osborne has weekly ultrasound and colposcopy clinics in which he teaches students how to perform these procedures and welcomes learners. Students should be introduced with a document stating objectives for each rotation, special interests and requests, whether hospital housing is desired, and an evaluation form. - can we post/link to these docs

Ask Dr Swartz

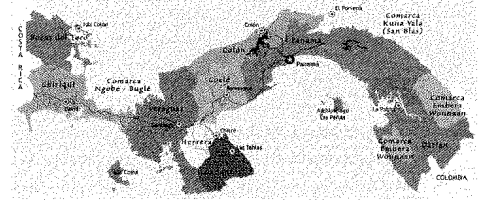
✚ **Primary site:** Hospital Materno-Infantil Jose Domingo de Obaldia in the city of David, Dr. Newton Osborne's high-volume referral hospital.

✚ **Secondary site:** Hospital San Felix is the main hospital of the Ngobe Bugle indigenous nation (*comarca*). Mainly low-risk births. Dr. Aura, the wife of Obaldia's chief of pediatrics (Dr. Geobaldo) is the medical director. It is located 1 hour's drive from Hospital Jose Domingo de Obaldia. It is feasible to take a day trip or to stay at nearby Las Lajas beach resort.

Logistics:

- **Orientation:** with Dr. Alcibiades Bautista, head of resident education (*jefe de docencia*). He will review expectations, schedule, and other logistics with the student.
- **Grading:** Dr. Alcibiades Bautista will complete the evaluation form students will bring from UMMS.
- **Transportation:** Several daily flights from Panama City (from the regional/domestic Allbrook airport) to David on 2 airlines, AeroPerlas and AeroPanama. Official airport taxi, easily picked up upon arrival, can transport student from airport to hospital or lodging of choice.
- **Lodging:**
 - Hospital: The hospital itself has some simple rooms with a single bed, locker, desk, and private bath. However, these are in high demand and may not be available.
 - The city of David has many good options; reasonable weekly and monthly rates are negotiable.
- **Meals:** Hospital has a special cafeteria for residents/medical students; student will be charged a small fee for these simple meals of rice, lentils, meat, lettuce, and dessert. There is another cafeteria for patients that you are welcome to use.

Next steps: memorandum of understanding (*convenio*) between UMMS and the board (*patronato*) of Hospital Materno-Infantil Jose Domingo de Obaldia. Dr. Alcibiades bautista recommends a rotation for residents as well as students.



Primary Care of the Underserved

Three potential sites:

(1) Hospital Santo Tomas

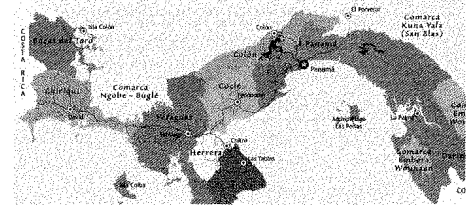
- A large public hospital and the major teaching institution in Panama (see Hema's report for details)
- Excellent variety of pathology and opportunity for direct patient care.

(2) Centro de Salud Boquete

- Tel (507) 720-2480, hours 7am – 3pm.
- Medical director: Dr. Pedro Honings (cell 6787-9578)
- Busy health clinic staffed by one internist, two general physicians, and one Ob/Gyn. Each physician sees approximately 30 patients per day. The clinic hosts occasional volunteers from the US (e.g. pre-med students), so providers are used to students. Volunteers help out with daily clinic work such as taking vitals, helping with paperwork, and shadowing. Excellent opportunity to experience primary care in Panama. Recommend at least one week at this clinic.
- For direct patient care opportunities, students require official approval to perform clinical duties from Panama's Ministerio de Salud
- Many excellent lodging options in Boquete

(3) Hospital San Felix

- Hospital of indigenous Ngobe Bugle nation (*comarca*)
- Located 1 hour's drive from Hospital Jose Domingo de Obaldia
- It is feasible to take a day trip or to stay at nearby Las Lajas beach resort
- Medical director is Dr. Aura, the wife of Obaldia's chief of pediatrics (Dr. Geobaldo)
- Dr. Alcibiades Bautista can put you in touch with her: jefe_docencia@yahoo.es



Pediatrics/Tropical Medicine

Two potential sites:

(1) Hospital del Nino

- See Hema's report for details.

(2) Hospital Materno-Infantil Jose Domingo de Obaldia

- Patients are mostly indigenous children with advanced disease superimposed upon malnutrition
- Student should send letter of introduction stating career interests and preferences for certain services so the head of resident education can alert chief attendings of each service
- Orientation with Dr. Alcibiades Bautista, head of resident education (*jefe de docencia*)
- Check-in after 4—6 days to assess what worked, what didn't, and plan the rest of the month
- General inpatient ward (40 beds for kids 2 – 14 years, 70 beds for babies 2 months – 2 years)
- Full range of specialty services: ER, hematology, GI, pulmonology, cardiology, neurology, allergy, surgery, ophthalmology, neonatology
- Most attendings (*functionarios*) are used to teaching and welcome it
- Pediatrics residents meet in the NICU for sit-down rounds with the attending, where each resident presents an overnight admission.

Odds and Ends

Suggested Lodging in Panama City: Bed and Breakfast La Estancia (www.bedandbreakfastpanama.com). They will meet student at the international airport in Panama City, book a flight to David at no charge, transport student to the domestic airport, and serve breakfast. Clean, comfortable rooms with A/C.

Sites visited but NOT recommended

1. Universidad Autonoma de Chiriqui is a private medical school near David. Dr. Felix Rodriguez is the dean (felix.rodriguez@unachi.ac.pa). Students rotate at many local *centros de salud* (health clinics) as well as several hospitals. They have had exchange students come before. Facilities vary widely in quality and accessibility.
2. Centro de Salud Palmiras is a small clinic in Boquete with one physician that has very low volume. Potentially higher volume during the annual coffee harvest (September through November), when Ngobe Bugle migrate to the area for work.
3. Centro de Salud de Kuna Yala. Spanish is not spoken.