

Healthcare in Bolivia

Erika Vasquez and Shaneese Clark

The overall healthcare system is often a focused concern in various developing countries, gaining more knowledge in this area can give us more cultural knowledge in healthcare in hopes of improving the system where it is needed. In order to learn more about the similarities and differences between the availability of services, care, techniques, and places of practice, we traveled to Tarija, Bolivia. We sought to observe and work with infants, children and general and pediatric care providers to experience and visualize their practices and overall focus on the health of the local population. We observed and cared for patients daily at a children's clinic and a regional hospital. At Centro de Salud, a clinic for young children, we evaluated their cognitive and nutritional conditions with an early childhood development monitoring instrument provided by the country. At San Juan de Dios, a regional hospital, several surgeries that involved children and even the birth of many were observed. Within a 5-day work week at Centro de Salud, we observed that only one child (0.03%) of the thirty-two we worked with was borderline malnourished. In our time at the regional hospital, we noted several differences between practices and the overall state of the hospital to what we know in the United States., facility structures were completely worn down indicating the lack of economic resources to maintain them. Bolivia tends to be more laid back with rules and regulations, however, they're also more limited in health care resources than the U.S.