

LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Introduction

Prior to taking part in health related experiences abroad, students or practitioners may desire a period of time to study a host country language. A number of resources are available in the area, and a variety of methods may be useful for language acquisition, both in formal study program and by utilizing more informal techniques. Medical students in particular have significant schedule constraints; the resources listed are therefore intended to guide those who must maximize learning in a short period of time. This guide lists a number of general study resources. However, of note is the recent establishment of several new programs for development of competence in the Spanish language with a special medical orientation.

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Language departments at local universities, in addition to providing courses, make tapes and other learning aids available, and may have access to native speakers, even in relatively less commonly spoken languages. For those who are progressing in their learning, video movies in the language of choice and short wave radio broadcasts from abroad may help with listening skills. Additionally, several interactive

computerized language study programs have recently been developed.

In many countries, enrollment in well-organized intensive courses can be arranged for periods ranging from a few days to several months. A number of U.S. organizations facilitate short-term coursework overseas, and national consulates and tourist offices can be helpful with questions about specific opportunities. Some of these programs are designed principally for health care personnel (see listings in *Resources*). We emphasize Spanish in this guide since it is the primary language for millions of North Americans, and resources are correspondingly more abundant. For a brief description of types of immersion language programs, please see the IHMEC publication *Foreign Language Study and International Health Work: Selected Resources*, online on the IHMEC website at www.ihmec.org.

Resources

Authors' note: while all efforts have been made to provide accurate information, no guarantees about current availability or quality can be made, and the user of this guide is urged to use personal discretion before expending significant resources on programs or study materials.

General

1. Intensive language courses are available domestically through a number of North American universities, primarily during summer sessions. Especially diverse programs are offered by Boston University, Yale University, and the University of California campuses in Berkeley and Los Angeles. For those anticipating work in Africa, the Summer Cooperative African Language Institute (SCALI) offers an eight week program each summer at one of the member universities on a rotating basis. Several languages are taught, and a small amount of tuition assistance is available.

The summer 1999 program was located at Yale University, (203)787-0696, www.yale.edu/scali. As the name implies, the Less Commonly Taught Languages Project of the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA) at the University of Minnesota provides resources on less commonly spoken languages worldwide, (612) 626-8600, www.carla.acad.umn.edu/lctl/lctlmaterials.html.

2. Audio-Forum: The Language Source. Catalog listing with audio and videocassettes and other study materials for more than 90 languages, including medical Spanish. 96 Broad Street, Guilford, Connecticut 06437, (800)243-1234, www.audioforum.com.

3. National Registration Center for Study Abroad (NRCSA). With contacts in more than 20 countries, publishes a periodic newsletter and arranges enrollment in universities and private schools overseas. Special language study emphasizing health care vocabulary is available in French and Spanish schools, and a limited number offer coordinated programs of clinic participation for medical students. Schools listed in promotional literature tend to be in higher fee ranges. 823 N. 2nd Street. P.O. Box 1393, Milwaukee, WI 53201, (414) 278-0631, www.nrcsa.com.

4. Eurocentres, extensive selection of short term European and Japanese language courses abroad. A small amount of scholarship assistance may be available. 101 N. Union Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, 800-648-4809, www.eurocentres.com.

5. Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE). Information on short-term service and work overseas, in addition to other opportunities for students wishing to spend time abroad. 205 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017, (800)226-8624, www.ciee.org.

6. Several web sites now list language study opportunities. The World Wide Classroom

indexes language study centers overseas at www.worldwide.edu. Additionally, www.languages-on-the-web.com provides a wide variety of online resources.

7. Travel guidebooks frequently list addresses of language schools overseas. Notable in this regard include *Let's Go*: guides, and the *Lonely Planet* series.

8. Many interactive computer language study programs have become available in recent years, with a good selection generally available at major computer stores. Several now claim to offer voice recognition functions, although this capability may be somewhat rudimentary. Information on two programs is available online at www.idrama.com/MedSpan.htm and www.significant-learning.com/espanol.htm (both of these web sites use case-sensitive spelling), and www.medicalamazon.com/medtech/532.html.

Medical Spanish Language Courses

9. *International Community Health and Medical Spanish*, Mexico. Three week University of Southern California summer program for first year medical students in Baja California, includes classroom study of medical Spanish and observation of urban and rural community health programs and clinics. Family homestay is arranged for participants. Offered in July each year by IHMEC member Dennis Mull. Dennis Mull, MD, MPH, Department of Family Medicine, University of Southern California, 1420 San Pablo St., PMB-B205, Los Angeles, CA 90033, (213) 342-1313, abbc3.hsc.edu/familymed/medspan/index.htm

10. *Interhealth South America*, Ecuador and Colombia. Four-week program for first and second year medical students, offered in June-July each year by IHMEC members Don Wedemeyer and Marta Alarcón. Medical Spanish language immersion experience, and Andes Mountains study tour introductory program in international health. Family homestay is arranged for

participants. Don Wedemeyer, MD, Mart Alarcón, MD, Interhealth South America, P.O. Box 398976, Miami Beach, FL 33239, (305) 674-6814, dwedemeyer@pol.net.

11. *Ohiyesa Language Proficiency Program*. Four-week Spanish language course in Guatemala with an introduction to the country's health care system and culture. Room and board is with a Guatemalan family. John H. Lyons, MD, Department of Anatomy, Dartmouth Medical School, Hanover, NH 03755, (603) 650-1640.

12. *Rios Associates*. Intensive four-day medical Spanish and other flexible programs for health professionals offered at various sites in California and the Southwest. 1351 E. Ft. Lowell Rd., Suite C, Tucson, AZ 85719, (520) 881-329 www.riosassociates.com.

13. *Weekend en Español*. Periodic weekend and one day medical Spanish programs in San Francisco. 1908 Buchanan Street, San Francisco, CA 94115, (415)923-0754, www.weekendenespanol.com/medical.ht .

14. *MEDICC*. Individual placements for medical and other health professional students in Cuba include a medical language study component in its programs. 328 Flatbush Ave., Box 406 Brooklyn, NY 11238, (718)623-1306, www.medicc.org.

15. Although *Child Family Health International* emphasizes clinic placement opportunities for advanced medical students, the foundation can arrange medical Spanish language instruction in Ecuador. Child Family Health International, 2149 Lyon St #5, San Francisco, CA 94115, (415)673-6234, (415)285-3446, www.cfhi.org.

16. The following language academies offer ongoing or periodic medical components in their general Spanish language programs. The reader is advised to seek information at the respective web sites for each:

Costa Rica

- *Ad Astra* – www.c-adastra.com

- *Amerispan* – www.amerispan.com/educational/cpi-mdsem.html
- *Centro Panamericano de Idiomas (CPI)* www.cpi.edu.com.
- *Comunicare*- www.comunicare.co.cr/medical.html
- *ILISA* - www.ilisa.com.

Ecuador

- *Salud*- www.amsa.org/sc/ihag/salud.html. Endorsed by AMSA.

Mexico

- *Cemanahuac Educational Community* - www.cemanahuac.com.
- *Mar de Jade* - www.mardejade.com.

17. *Practical Spanish for Health Care Providers*, University of Arizona. Five - module presentation includes videotapes, audiocassettes, and text. May be utilized by groups or individuals. Preview video available. John Condon, EdD, Program Director, Biomedical Communications, University of Arizona Health Science Center, Tucson, AZ 85724, (602)277-8867.

French Language Courses Abroad

18. *Alliance Française*, 2819 Ordway Street, NW, Washington, DC 20008, (800)637 - 2623; or 101 Boulevard Raspail, 75270 Paris Cedex 06, France, Telephone (011 - 33)45-44-3828, www.afusa.org.

Selected Resources

19. Fuller G, *How to Learn a Foreign Language*, Storm King Press; and Brown-Azarowicz M, Stannard C, Goldin M, *Yes! You Can Learn a Foreign Language*, Passport Books. Short handbooks with practical advice for those who have not previously studied a foreign language, or who have had a disappointing experience trying to learn one.

20. Bilingual medical dictionaries for health professionals are published in a number of languages. Spilker B, *Medical Dictionary in Six Languages*, Raven Press, offers translations in French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Japanese. For Spanish, four convenient and relatively inexpensive pocket size dictionaries are available, Herrera McElroy O and Grabb L, *English-Spanish, Spanish -English Medical Dictionary*, Little, Brown, 2nd edition, 1996; Rogers G, *English-Spanish, Spanish-English Medical Dictionary*, McGraw-Hill, 2nd edition, 1997; Kelz R, *Delmar's English/Spanish Pocket Dictionary for Health Professionals*, Delmar Publishers, 1997; and Artschwager K, et al., *Southwestern Medical Dictionary, Spanish-English, English -Spanish*, University of Arizona Press, 1977. The first of these is especially recommended, and includes a brief section on basic Spanish grammar structure. For those who desire a monolingual Spanish medical dictionary *Stedman's Medical Dictionary* is translated as *Stedman's Diccionario de Ciencias Médicas*, 25th edition, 1993. In addition, *Oxford-Duden (Bilingual) Pictorial Dictionaries*, Oxford University Press, provide detailed illustrations on a variety of technical and non-technical topics, including medicine, nursing, allied health fields, dentistry, etc., and are available in several European and Asian languages.

21. Medical Spanish and Medical French:

Books in the McGraw-Hill *Schaum's Foreign Language Series* are designed to assist users become more proficient at communicating in French or Spanish about different professions or fields of study. Readers with a basic understanding of the subject matter and background in the language may utilize them most effectively. For health professions, the French is Lutz K and Schmitt C, *Médecine et Soins Médicaux; Lectures et Vocabulaire en Français*; and Spanish Schmitt C and Woodford P, *Medicina y Servicios Médicos; Lecturas y Vocabulario en Español*. Texts

provide simple medically-oriented essays, detailed clinical and anatomic vocabulary, and writing exercises. Although in the authors' opinions the Spanish version offers the most well organized and convenient format among the many available medical Spanish textbooks, at press time several of the titles in the series were no longer being published. Dollinger R., *Pocket Medical Spanish* and *Pocket Medical French*, J.D.V. Publishing, use very basic phrases for non-speakers of the respective languages.

22. Medical Spanish

Gonzalez-Lee T, Simon H, *Medical Spanish: Interviewing the Latino Patient; A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, Prentice Hall. Recommended for a particularly effective use of a high impact format, and the inclusion of accompanying audiocassettes. Like the Schaum's series, it is written primarily for those who already possess a basic knowledge of the language. Numerous beginning level medical Spanish textbooks are available. One well-organized recommended text is Rajkovic A, *Manual for (Relatively) Painless Medical Spanish; A Self-Teaching Course*, University of Texas Press. *Salud: Medical Spanish for Health Professionals* is a bi-weekly publication in newspaper format, with accompanying bilingual glossary and grammatical presentations. Educational News Service, P.O. Box 60478, Florence, MA 01062-0478, (800) 600-4494. Also recommended is Sylvester N, Perry L, Glackin G. *Medical Readings in Spanish*. CBS College Publishing, 383 Madison Ave., NY, NY 10017.

23. Medical Portuguese

Practical Portuguese for Health Professionals. Ordering information available from the publisher Southeastern Massachusetts Area Health Education Center, Inc., P.O. Box 69, Marion, MA 02738, (508) 748-0837.

24. Medical Russian

Dollinger R, *Pocket Medical Russian* like the Spanish and French editions uses basic phrases for non-speakers of the language.

25. Werner D, *Where There Is No Doctor*, Hesperian Foundation. Werner's guide for community health workers is translated into 80+ languages. While overseas it can be useful to have copies in both English and the host country language for general health information. The abundant use of simple illustrations makes them particularly valuable for vocabulary development. Other foundation publications are also available in translation. Hesperian Foundation, 1919 Addison St., Suite 304, Berkeley, CA 94704, (510) 845-4507, www.hesperian.org.



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