



MOUNT SINAI  
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**Medicina en Espanol  
Testimonials from Belize Trip  
April 2007**

**John Leikauf**

Basically, it brought me from totally useless to actually taking a partial history from a Spanish speaking patient. I was definitely able to get demographic info and also ask some basic questions about chief complaint and the hpi that were relevant to what we wanted to know (especially since we couldn't do that much anyway). I mean, you saw me, it's not like I can speak comfortably yet, but since I knew no Spanish at all last Fall, I felt like the course was very helpful for Belize and for my practice in the future, and I definitely want to continue with it. Also, I was able to tell (for the most part) whether the translators were sticking to the questions I was asking and actually translating for the patient, which is helpful by itself. I think more actual practice speaking (rather than writing) in the class might be helpful, though.

Feel free to reword this into any kind of a supportive quote and attach my name to it and thanks again for running the program.

**Lauren Marcewitz**

medical spanish TOTALLY helped - in fact, it was invaluable. i was in the "english only" van, but our last site was near the guatemalan border and all except a few of our many patients spoke spanish and no english. i've taken two semesters of beginner's level medical spanish, and i had a lot of trepidation about even saying hello in spanish. however, when it became clear that there was only one other student who was capable of communicating with spanish-speakers, i decided to bite the bullet and start doing histories in spanish. the histories were rudimentary, but being able to communicate with patients in their own language clearly set them at ease and made their visit run far smoother than if i had to wait for an interpreter.

i'd like to add that for doctors who will be seeing patients in the new york area, learning spanish is almost a necessity - providing quality care to spanish speakers in our community requires it. funding for the medical spanish program reflects Sinai's commitment to providing quality care for the local community, and is absolutely fundamental, far beyond its application to the belize trip.

**Hana Grobel**

Hey Tanya! I think medical spanish really helped me prepare for Belize. I hadn't taken spanish for a few years and forgot a lot. It helped learn certain phrases, like Ha tenido...It also really helped my listening skills.

**Clair McClung**

I definitely benefited from medical Spanish. I started out as a beginner last fall and I was able to conduct interviews with Spanish-speaking patients in Belize by myself without a translator much of the time. I was still stumbling over verb conjugations, and probably sounded completely ridiculous, but I was able to get the medical idea across to the patient. I would have been completely lost if I had not taken medical Spanish. I generally had a better rapport with patients because they could see that I was making an effort to make them comfortable by speaking in their language. Even when we did most of the visit in English, it was useful to be able to clarify some issues in Spanish. I also think that taking medical Spanish improved my history-taking skills overall because we spent time going over how to ask the essential questions in Spanish.

I am really interested in continuing medical Spanish over the summer and really look forward to becoming a more fluent and better provider for Spanish-speaking patients. Good luck!

### **David Luo**

Taking Medical Spanish made a big difference in my experience in Belize. I took the beginner class for two terms and at the start of the trip, I felt prepared to initiate a conversation and begin taking a patient history in Spanish. I was a little rusty at the start of clinic days but could definitely register patients by myself. By the end of the trip, I was taking simple patient histories and doing physical exams completely in Spanish. I only needed help from a translator when there was a very complicated history or statement I wanted to convey. In short, Medical Spanish really enhanced my ability and confidence to communicate directly with the majority of my patients. I am very grateful to have taken the course and consider it an indispensable option for all medical students.

### **Amelia Huck**

Medical Spanish helped me a ton in Belize. Obviously, I was still pretty hopeless, but I would have been speaking only English without it.