

Should I Stay or Should I go?

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Editorial

That's the question!

Experiencing an international training program is one of the most frequent request for a resident. If possible, they can have many opportunities for international health experiences during their training and their choice is mainly influenced by their area of expertise and interests.

Residents usually describe their experiences and report benefit in different ways: seeing a wide variety of pathology, gaining experience with new diseases and knowing new people, new cultures, ideas, new ways of thinking and new colleagues.

Of course, there are a lot of positives aspects in experiencing a international stage or a fellowship but are we sure that everything has only lights and not shadows?

In this short Editorial, I'll try to describe the experience I've gained during my foreing stage in Brasil.

As I arrived in Brasil my first impact was with the new language. Except at the Hospital with colleagues, and at the University, my scientific english was not so useful in my everyday life. The lack of a clear communication, with the people I met day by day, was frustrating: ordering a dish, asking informations, buying bus tickets... everything was difficult at the beginning.

I've immediately tried to figure how the city was arranged. Public transportations, distances and I tried to fix the key points of my new life: finding a supermarket, a good restaurant, a coffee shop and something for a bit of leisure (cinemas, public parks, shopping malls). Thinking as a European, thinking about my daily lifestyle, everything seemed to be too difficult to understand and to face.

In a moment: new city, new life, different language, different culture and different food...everything was new and unknown; I've faced challenges in everyday life that I have never experienced before. Homesickness, feelings of alienation and various other factors led me

to sadness but taking the initiative to go out and enjoy that amazing new life ended all of these!

In few weeks, in that 24h full immersion, I've started to understand "os pontos principais" in a conversation and after just one month of "listening and practicing" my portuguese increased well. Bombarded in all directions by the host language after my arrival, I learned much more of that country's tongue than I ever could sitting in a classroom. I perfectly understood how people live and I adapted myself in this new exciting life. Personally, I don't like living alone, so I looked for a shared house with other people and, going back home, it was really nice to talk with the other roommates and share with them a part of my new life.

My will to discover "the new world" led me to buy a travelling guide and to plan small trips to discover new amazing places. The Paraná, the Minas Gerais Region, the Iguacu Falls...After breaking the links with my previous lifestyle I opened my mind to new knowledge in terms of places, foods, people and friends.

All the difficulties associated with everyday life during a period abroad can truly teach a person countless life lessons. By living independently in a foreign country, without the aid of their parents, the residents will return to their home with new strength. It may seem challenging and hard to face but... It isn't! For those who are going to experience something similar I only would like to remind these 5 points:

Think, eat, drink and live like a local one!

Go out and discover the country!

Practice the language!

Be open-minded!

Be social!

You'll enjoy one of the best experience of your life!