



## EPA GAINING EXPERIENCE PROGRAMME REPORT

On the observership at the *Institute of Psychiatry and Mental Health Hospital General Universitario*

*Gregorio Marañon*

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By *Alena Leonova (Russia)*

### REPORT:

My name is Alena Leonova, I am a psychiatrist from the city of Tyumen, which is located in the south of Western Siberia in Russia. It follows that getting to the desired place of practice was very difficult for me. But all the effort was worth it!

But about everything in order. Due to the fact that I work more with children and adolescents, but adult patients are also not uncommon in my psychiatric practice, the choice of a leading organization and curator was obvious to me. Celso Arango was familiar to me from several educational programs that I had participated in earlier. After receiving a letter that I was chosen as one of the 10 lucky ones of 2023-2024, the first thing I did was to agree on the date of my stay in practice, which was decided as soon as possible. To my great regret, the duration of the internship was shortened by a couple of days due to the cancellation of the plane flight, but thanks to a competent approach in organizing my stay, this delay did not affect the completion of the internship.

From the very first day of my stay at the clinic, after a short acquaintance, Professor Arango and I went to the conference room for a meeting of the Journal club. The event brought together about 100 doctors and residents from all institutions of the city in person and online. Due to the fact that the official language of Spain is Spanish, all communications took place in it. Despite the fact that I studied the language for a couple of months to prepare for the trip, this did not allow me to understand it fluently, much less communicate in it. However, I did not feel uncomfortable at any event – Professor Arango brought me up to date, translating the main theses.

After the Journal Club, there was an opportunity to get to know each other more thoroughly. I did not prepare a special presentation with slides, but I was able to tell about myself, my interests in words. We decided that the main focus during the internship would be on research activities, because despite the fact that I already have a PhD degree, I continue to deal with scientific issues at the present time.

I must say that my working day started daily at 8.00 a.m. and ended around 3.00 p.m. And every minute was organized by a clinical, scientific, research process. On the first day, in accordance with my interests, a schedule was formed for all subsequent days. Professor Arango supervised and helped me throughout the time, in the morning we discussed plans for the day, at the end of the day I shared my impressions and expressed my wishes.

During my internship, I have repeatedly visited the collection of data from patients and people from the control group to study psychoses. I was able to attend not only a clinical interview with a research psychiatrist, but also a neuropsychological examination. I would like to say that all the Researchers and clinicians interacting with me were very positive and were ready to explain everything necessary. Some of the patients spoke English fluently, so it was possible to build a dialogue with them directly. Another study concerned early age children with whom I often interact at psychiatric appointments in Russia, so an in-depth examination of their areas of mental activity using specialized questionnaires turned out to be very useful for



me. The responsive specialists of the clinic (Leticia Boada, Antonia San Jose Caceres) shared with me invaluable skills and materials that I brought home with great pleasure!

In addition, I managed to visit all kinds of psychiatric departments of the clinic. Of particular interest was the in-patient unit for adolescents, whose work was introduced to me in detail by the psychiatrist Maria Jose Penzol. She also managed to get to know several patients and determine their treatment trajectory. A visit to a day hospital for teenagers was a delight – this is how care for such a group of patients should be organized! It is necessary to mention the department for working with people with ASD, as well as the department for helping people with behavioral addictions. On one of the days of the internship, we managed to take part in home visits to patients in the outreach program – an excellent opportunity for those for whom hospital stay is not favorable, for example, for patients with ASD, when acute symptoms have already been stopped. An interesting experience for me was visiting the intensive care unit where ECT procedures are performed, since such a treatment method is not available in my hometown. The psychiatrist conducting the procedure, anesthesiologists, and nurses were happy to share their experiences with me.

Educational events took place almost daily in the clinic: features of the use of medicines, clinical reviews, trainings. Thanks to the huge number of people I managed to get to know in practice, all these events did not pass me by, all the basic information was translated to me!

Getting to know young research colleagues turned out to be important, and plans for international cooperation were outlined.

Summarizing all the above, I can say that the internship at the Institute of Psychiatry and Mental Health Hospital General Universitario Gregorio Marañon under the guidance of Celso Arango took me to a new level! And it's not just about the knowledge gained, but, to a greater extent, in a new communication experience!

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