



Global Aging Perspectives: Santiago, Chile

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Location: Santiago, Chile

- Capital of Chile
- Over 5.8 million residents (35% of Chile)
- most (85.4%) Chileans are of European descent and White or Mestizo (born of mix between a native Indian and Spanish immigrant)
- Despite Chile's long history of public health, there is still not a systematic and comprehensive approach to health and social services for its aging population. Health reforms resulting in private health sector growth have increased risk segmentation and inequalities in service provision. (Gitlin and Fuentes, 2012)

Aging Population:

Similar to the baby boomer trend, the rise in the older adult population is significant in Santiago, Chile. Chile is one of the most prosperous nations in Latin America, and it has one of the largest proportions of older adults in that region.

It is anticipated that the aging population will continue to increase to represent 20.8% of the population by 2044.

As a Geriatric Scholar, the assessment of this community is extremely applicable in my direct interpersonal work with older adults in various settings.

Global Independent Study

The purpose of this Global Independent study was to gather and assess data on perspectives of aging through the viewpoint of direct care workers in Santiago, Chile. The study included questions about:

- **Role of professional in gerontological services**
- **Barriers faced by older adults and in service provision**
- **Current services available**
- **Solutions to the aging population service demand and challenges**
- **Role of families and caregivers in relation to aging**

Agency/Community Partner

Professionals from various older adult specific agencies were interviewed:

- Casa Reposo Esperanza (Esperanza Nursing Home)
- SENAMA Servicio Nacional del Adulto Mayor (National Services for Older Adults)
- Centro de Dia Huechuraba (Adult Day Center Huechuraba)
- Fundacion Oportunidad Mayor (Older Adult Opportunity Foundation)

Outcomes

Community Assessment Needs and Solutions:

- Need for Memory Care Units
- Increase policies and funding for older adults
- Training in housing development and addictions management
- Increase participation for older adults- activities to increase engagement
- Advocate for elder abuse
- More adult day care centers, especially for most vulnerable older adults
- Monetary support for current long term stay facilities and nursing homes
- Family programs and caregiver support
- Increase quality and quantity of services
- Dissipate misconceptions of older adults

Skills Utilized/Developed

From this Global Study I developed skills in:

- Application of assessment in communities
- Program Development
- Interpersonal Practice approaches to older adult care
- Evaluation of efficacy of interventions for older adults

Classroom Connections

SW 644 Policies and Services for Older Adults

This course guided me in developing interview questions for service evaluation specific for older adults. It also guided me in my comparison of the strengths and limitations of existing policies and programs related to health, mental health, funding, long-term care, housing, transportation, nutrition, and employment issues between the United States and Santiago, Chile.

SW 504 Diversity and Social Justice in Social Work

This course prepared me in my global work by providing me with the knowledge base that underlies skills needed to work towards justice. These include types and sources of power, multiple social locations, social constructions, social processes, social identities, conflicts, and how all these interact within communities and societies. I was able to incorporate this knowledge in analyzing the results gathered and guided my interviews with the professionals of organizations for older adults.

Lessons Learned

- Resilience is key in global study pursuits and in care for older adults. One must be able to apply the strengths approach and develop solutions to recover from barriers faced within this population.
- Networks are crucial in entering communities and organizations.
- The way government operates in different countries majorly affects services and funding for organizations. The United States possesses many privileges above many countries.



Career Connections

As a social worker, I strive for quality and access of care and through this global experience I have learned how to conduct an assessment that can highlight barriers and solutions needed to address these crucial standards of treatment provision. Furthermore, I have been able to incorporate some aspects of my results into program development by advocating for in-home services for older adults through my and continued research on caregiver support services.

Advice

- Research some of the cultural aspects of where you are traveling ahead of time. This will really help in recognizing privilege and improving interaction within the community.
- It is okay if your plan does not turn out the way you intended to, make the most out of it, remember you are there to learn and make a difference.
- Make connections!
- Have back-ups for projects
- Trust in your social work abilities and be a self-starter. If you want the answer to something go and get it.

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