

Copenhagen, Denmark Nursing Study Abroad

Nursing: Childbearing and Reproductive Health Clinical Program with DIS in Copenhagen, Denmark: Summer 2019

Course: PNE 315/ NURS 352

Amanda Jacobs, Class of 2020

Copenhagen, Denmark

Copenhagen, the location of this course, is a small Scandinavian country with socialized healthcare and a constitutional monarchy, with a representative democracy.

Other Important Background

- Labor and delivery in Denmark is considered a natural, healthy process, and women are taken care of by skilled midwives rather than doctors or nurses. Obstetricians work alongside the midwives for medical complications of pregnancy. This is a contrast to the US, where only 8% of births are attended by a midwife.



Experience

Information

I and nine other junior level nursing students spent four weeks in Copenhagen, where we completed our OB nursing clinical. The first week dedicated to learning about the culture and healthcare system, and in the weeks after we were placed in Danish hospitals paired one-on-one with a midwife for immersive clinicals, which included labor and delivery and sometimes consultations or cesarean sections.

Purpose of Trip:

The purpose of our trip was to learn from Danish midwives and the Danish healthcare system, including the way they care for their laboring women with less, and more natural interventions. This trip was also designed to expose us to another country and culture's hospital system and help us be more open-minded in our own practice.

Skills Utilized/Developed

During my experience abroad, the biggest skill I developed was communication, especially non-verbal. While many of my patients spoke English, some did not, and most women preferred to speak in their native language while they were in labor and being coached by their midwife. I also learned specific skills to midwifery such as pain relief techniques, rebozo, positioning, and massage to help a woman progress through labor. I also feel that I developed strong self-assurance through this experience to earn the trust of patients, as well as to travel and commute (often alone) in a foreign country. All of these skills will be highly applicable and helpful in my future practice as a nurse.

Classroom Connections

This global experience earned students clinical course credit for PNE courses associated with junior level NURS 352 Obstetrics and Womens' Health Nursing.

Lessons Learned

This trip was full of invaluable lessons, but most importantly I learned to keep an open mind about healthcare, treatments, and patients backgrounds, to communicate with the goal of keeping patients at the center of my care, and I learned that there is always more to learn.



Career Connections

Learning from the midwives in Denmark helped prepare us for our future careers by developing communication skills with patients even when language was a barrier, and by teaching us natural methods of pain control and caring for laboring patients.

Advice

For anyone interested in midwifery, labor and delivery, or an international educational experience, I would highly recommend this program. The best advice I can give is to fully immerse yourself in your abroad experience and learn everything you can about the country and culture.

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