GEMx program welcomes student from top Mexican university

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Salvador Alvarado with, from left, GPH’s Dr. Sohaila Cheema, Raji Anand and Dr. Ravinder Mamtani.

WCM-Q has hosted a student from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) through the Global Education in Medicine Exchange (GEMx) program.

Salvador Alvarado, 24, is in the sixth and final year of his medical degree at UNAM, which is located in Mexico City and is home to one of the most highly regarded medical faculties in the Spanish-speaking world. Salvador spent four weeks at WCM-Q in September and October taking the Population Health and Primary Care Perspectives elective, thanks to the GEMx program.

GEMx, a program of the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), offers a collaborative, comprehensive web-based system through which partner universities can publish details of the electives they offer. Students can use the system to apply for the electives, safe in the knowledge that the host school has signed up to the ECFMG charter, which guarantees established standards of student support and pre-agreed learning outcomes.

Salvador said: "I have learned many things while I have been here at WCM-Q and I have had the chance to see how a healthcare system works in a different part of the world, which has been extremely worthwhile to me."

"I have been very impressed by the way Qatar has developed its healthcare system and I feel I have learned some very valuable lessons I hope I can one day apply in my own country. I am very grateful for the warm welcome I received from WCM-Q and for this opportunity through the GEMx program to see how healthcare is provided in a different cultural environment."

GEMx, which is a program of the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), is a global partnership of medical schools that facilitates student exchanges among 27 institutions based in 20 countries around the world.
the world. The program aims to provide experiences to students that help them to gain a global perspective on healthcare while simultaneously fostering cooperation between medical schools around the world.

Dr. Ravinder Mamtani, associate dean for global and public health at WCM-Q, is chair of the GEMx Advisory Committee.

He said: "We are delighted that Salvador chose to come here to Weill Cornell Medicine – Qatar. His very positive experience speaks volumes about the benefits of GEMx, which has made it relatively easy for a student from many thousands of miles away to take an elective here at WCM-Q. We feel this has been a wonderfully enriching experience for both Salvador and for our community here at WCM-Q."

Dr. Sohaila Cheema, director of global and public health at WCM-Q, said: "We are so pleased that we had this opportunity to welcome Salvador here from one of our GEMx partner schools, the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

"GEMx is a wonderful way for students to broaden their horizons and for medical knowledge and skills to be shared on a worldwide basis. It is a fantastic vehicle for exploring global health, to create global dialogue amongst students and educators worldwide and we look forward to receiving more students to partake in this enriching experience in the future."

Inspired by his experience, Salvador has high hopes of working to influence public health policy in Mexico. He said: “My goal now is to gain a master’s degree in public health studies at a good college in the US and then to work in research in a public institution in my country. My ultimate dream is to be health minister in my home country to apply all the knowledge I have learned and change our healthcare system.

"Maybe it’s a crazy dream, but if you don’t dream it then you can never achieve it."

For more information about the GEMx Program and how you can get involved, visit [http://www.gemxelectives.org](http://www.gemxelectives.org)