

## **My visit to Colombia as the Anne G. Osborn International Outreach Professor**

It was an incredible honor and privilege to serve as the Anne G. Osborn ASNR International Outreach Professor and to represent the American Society of Neuroradiology in Colombia. This experience not only allowed me to share knowledge and expertise in neuroimaging but also offered a rich opportunity to build professional and cultural connections with our radiology colleagues in this vibrant and dynamic country.

### **Day 1 – Arrival in Medellín**

I arrived late in the evening in Medellín, where I was warmly welcomed at the airport by Drs. Mauricio Estrada and Raquel Abdulla, who graciously came to pick me up at 11 PM. Their kindness and hospitality set the tone for the rest of the visit. I checked into a beautiful hotel perched in the hills of Medellín, offering spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. The natural beauty of the region was immediately evident and added to the warmth I felt from my gracious hosts.

### **Day 2 – Educational Session with Trainees in Medellín**

The next morning, I participated in a four-hour interactive training session with radiology trainees from across the Medellín region. The session included approximately 50 participants, consisting mainly of radiology residents, one neuroradiology fellow, and about 10 attending radiologists from several major hospitals.

The format of the session was unique and highly engaging. The trainees had prepared approximately 15 cases to present. Each case was introduced by one of the trainees, who was then assigned to lead the discussion and present an accompanying educational PowerPoint. I was deeply impressed by both the clinical depth and the educational quality of the presentations. The trainees demonstrated excellent analytical thinking and a deep commitment to learning.

The PowerPoint slides were well-researched, beautifully crafted, and demonstrated a high level of preparation and professionalism.

Following the session, I joined about 10 colleagues from the training for lunch at a lovely local restaurant. We enjoyed Bandeja Paisa, a traditional Colombian dish that includes pork, fried plantains, beans, and egg. The meal was delicious and the company was delightful. Conversations ranged from academic topics to cultural insights, and it was clear that there was a shared enthusiasm for radiology education and international collaboration.

In the afternoon, Dr. Ricardo Uribe Gonzalez and two radiology residents accompanied me on a walking tour of Comuna 13, a historic neighborhood of Medellín. Known for its difficult past as one of the most violent and crime-ridden areas in the city, Comuna 13 has undergone a dramatic transformation in recent years. The tour highlighted its remarkable revival through community engagement, public art, and infrastructure investments such as outdoor escalators and safe public spaces.



It was moving to see how a place once plagued by violence is now a thriving symbol of resilience and creativity. From the top of the neighborhood, we had a breathtaking panoramic view of Medellín surrounded by lush green mountains. The blend of natural beauty and human perseverance left a profound impression on me.



That evening, I received a very special visit at my hotel from Dr. Milena Alcaraz, Chair of the Department of Radiology at the University of Antioquia. She presented me with a certificate of recognition from the Dean of the Medical School, in appreciation of the training session I conducted with the residents. This thoughtful gesture was deeply meaningful and a highlight of the trip. It underscored the value of academic exchange and affirmed the spirit of collaboration that this outreach program seeks to foster.

### **Day 3 – Cartagena and the Colombian Congress of Radiology**

The next morning, I traveled to Cartagena to participate in the annual Colombian Congress of Radiology. Upon arrival, I was welcomed by Dr. Federico G. Lubinus, the Scientific Committee Coordinator and Dr. Michel Hernández, the president of ACR, who ensured that all invited faculty felt well supported and integrated into the event.

At the Congress, I delivered four lectures on various topics within neuro-oncologic imaging. These talks covered imaging approaches to pediatric and adult brain tumors, advanced imaging biomarkers, and the evolving role of molecular imaging in neuro-oncology. The sessions were very well attended, and the audience was highly engaged. I was asked numerous thoughtful questions after each lecture, reflecting the participants' deep interest in the subject matter and their commitment to academic excellence. I was also thoroughly impressed by the quality of other presentations at the Congress. Colombian speakers presented state-of-the-art content with excellent visuals and clinical relevance. Despite my limited knowledge of Spanish, I was able to follow much of the content thanks to the clarity and visual quality of the presentations. The Congress provided an excellent forum for academic exchange and reinforced how much we can learn from one another globally.



### **Day 4 – Cartagena City Tour**

The day after my lectures, I joined about ten other invited guests for a guided tour of Cartagena. The tour provided a comprehensive look at the city's historical and cultural richness. Cartagena is a city of striking contrasts—part of it features modern, Miami-like architecture and beachside boulevards, while the historic center preserves its colonial charm with narrow cobbled streets, colorful facades, and lively plazas.

We explored the old walled city, with its fortifications and architecture dating back centuries, and also visited neighborhoods that reflect a more contemporary Colombian identity. The tour highlighted the unique duality of Cartagena—modern yet steeped in history, relaxed yet vibrant. It was a wonderful way to connect with other speakers and further appreciate the cultural context in which our professional activities were taking place.

### **Reflections and Gratitude**

This visit to Colombia was an unforgettable professional and personal experience. It highlighted the universal language of education, the strength of international partnerships, and the passion of radiologists everywhere who are committed to excellence and growth. I returned inspired by the dedication of Colombian trainees and educators, moved by the hospitality of my hosts, and grateful for the opportunity to be a small part of their academic journey.



I would like to express my deepest thanks to the American Society of Neuroradiology for this extraordinary opportunity through the Anne G. Osborn International Outreach Professor Program. I am also profoundly grateful to the Colombian Association of Radiology for their exceptional generosity, warm hospitality, and flawless organization throughout the visit. Their gracious hosting made every part of my trip—from lodging and meals to intercity travel—seamless and welcoming, and their commitment to academic excellence made the experience both impactful and inspiring.

Special thanks are due to Drs. Mauricio Estrada, Raquel Abdulla, Ricardo Uribe Gonzalez, Milena Alcaraz, Feliza Restrepo, Michel Hernández, and Federico G. Lubinus for their incredible generosity, enthusiasm, and support. I am also especially grateful to Mr. Alejandro Baena G., Coordinador Operativo de Actividades Académicas y de Comunicaciones at the Asociación Colombiana de Radiología, whose tireless behind-the-scenes coordination ensured everything ran smoothly.

This outreach visit reaffirmed the power of collaboration and the importance of global engagement in advancing radiology education. I look forward to staying in touch with my new colleagues and to supporting future initiatives between ASNR and radiology communities worldwide.

With gratitude,

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