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Comparing American Retail Pharmacies to Italian and Greek Retail Pharmacies

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Shea Dolan

Davidson Honors College

Capstone Report & Reflection

1 August 2022

After hearing word that I received a scholarship from the Davidson Honors College Impact Fund, I was ecstatic. The reason I applied for a Davidson Honors College scholarship was to help with travel expenses that would be used towards my capstone project in both Italy and Greece. I decided my Davidson Honors College capstone project would compare the similarities and differences in American retail pharmacies versus Italian and Greek retail pharmacies. Once again, this scholarship helped me immensely when planning out travel costs to explore the many pharmacies located within both countries.

My trip was taken during May of 2022. I started off in Italy and had the opportunity to tour pharmacies in both Rome, Italy and Venice, Italy. The architecture alone of the pharmacies was incredible. Seeing how everyday operations were carried out was very intriguing to me. COVID-19 protocols were much more strict in Italy during May of 2022 when compared to the United States. Every street corner had rapid COVID-19 testing centers that many locals and tourists took advantage of. I was also able to speak with some Italian pharmacists and ask questions of how they run their pharmacy as well as what made them decide to go into a career in pharmacy. While there was somewhat of a language barrier, I was able to understand the majority of what the pharmacists were speaking to me. Every pharmacist in Italy that I conversed with was eager to talk to me and was excited for me to enter the career of pharmacy.

My next stop was Greece. I was able to look at retail pharmacies in both Athens, Greece and Santorini, Greece. While both countries were very helpful in providing me with their pharmacy expertise, I was able to build a lasting relationship with one of the pharmacists in Santorini, Greece. Maria Lavda is a pharmacist that I met while I was touring the greek island, Santorini. From the moment I walked into her pharmacy and explained my capstone project to her, she wanted to help me in any way she could. While I was in her pharmacy, she showed me the most common medications distributed, best sunscreens for tourists to purchase, as well as how medication pricing worked in Greece. When it was time for me to leave to go back to Montana, Maria did not want our conversations to end. She offered to give me her personal email so we could stay in touch as well as provide me with a resource if other questions arose. I had a Zoom call with Maria after I had returned home from Europe and was able to ask some more questions such as how COVID-19 was battled in 2020 compared to how it is currently handled within her pharmacy, greek pharmacy education, and accessibility to the public. She was extremely helpful to me and I was very grateful to have met her while being in Santorini.

After finishing up my capstone project, I feel as though I have not only broadened my knowledge of how pharmacy in the United States is carried out, but also very interesting practices that are carried out in different countries. Before going on my trip, I had little knowledge of how Italian and Greek retail pharmacies worked when compared to American retail pharmacies. However, after having the amazing opportunity to physically go to the countries to see for myself the many similarities and differences was truly a once in a lifetime experience. This is what makes the University of Montana's Davidson Honors College so special. Having the capability to construct a capstone project overseas is rare, but with the help of scholarships that are available to DHC students, it makes it possible. I believe that because of

the experience that I was able to have as a student in the Davidson Honors College, I will be an enhanced pharmacist that has knowledge on topics that most other pharmacists did not have the opportunity to participate in. I believe that this was a great way for me to end my Davidson Honors College experience, and I cannot thank everyone enough for what these last four years have given me.