What it’s like to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology: Shadowing Dr. Ramos

JUL 15, 2021

Staff News Writer

As a medical student, do you ever wonder what it's like to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology? Meet Diana Ramos, MD (@DrDianaRamosMD), an ob-gyn and a featured physician in the AMA’s “Shadow Me” Specialty Series, which offers advice directly from physicians about life in their specialties. Check out her insights to help determine whether a career in obstetrics and gynecology might be a good fit for you.

The AMA's Specialty Guide simplifies medical students' specialty selection process by highlighting major specialties, detailing training information and providing access to related association information. It is produced by FREIDA™, the AMA Residency & Fellowship Database®.

Learn more with the AMA about the medical specialty of obstetrics and gynecology.

"Shadowing" Dr. Ramos

Diana Ramos, MD
Specialty: Obstetrics and gynecology.

Practice setting: Government, university and hospital in Southern California.

Employment type: Employed by a state department of public health, a medical school and a health system.

Years in practice: 20.

A typical day and week in my practice: Every day is different. There is always lots of programmatic work, but I also serve as a media spokesperson and I am part of the in-house labor and delivery team. A typical week can be as few as 40 hours or as many as 60.

The most challenging and rewarding aspects of obstetrics and gynecology: It’s hard not being able to immediately address social determinants of health, especially in the area of mental health. On the other hand, I get to help patients on multiple levels, from population health to individual health and even bringing new lives into the world.

How life in obstetrics and gynecology has been affected by the global pandemic: Labor and delivery are unchanged in terms of delivering care, but support for mothers is restricted because of the risk of infection to staff and other patients in the hospital. As we reopen, restrictions are being lifted.

The long-term impact the pandemic will have on obstetrics and gynecology: Various stakeholders are looking at possibly redefining how many prenatal care visits are needed. The way health care is being delivered is changing—for example, telehealth.

Three adjectives to describe the typical ob-gyn: Caring, enthusiastic and unstoppable.

How my lifestyle matches, or differs from, what I had envisioned: I have the lifestyle I want. I created it, but it was made possible by the flexibility that obstetrics and gynecology offer. Ob-gyns can make their own schedules, choose what kind of care they want to deliver, and pursue interests outside of medicine.

Skills every physician in training should have for obstetrics and gynecology but won’t be tested for on the board exam: You have to love what you do. When you are up at 3 a.m. delivering a baby or doing emergency laparoscopic surgery for an ovarian torsion, you have to remember you are there because this is what you love to do.

One question physicians in training should ask themselves before pursuing obstetrics and gynecology: What is important in my life? Said another way, will this field allow me the flexibility to
do what is important to me?

**Books every medical student interested in diagnostic radiology and nuclear medicine should be reading:** I recommend these books to everyone, not just ob-gyns.

*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change*, by Stephen R. Covey. It reminds us about relationships and how to deal with ourselves, family and patients.

*Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient: Reflections on Healing and Regeneration*, by Norman Cousins. An outstanding reminder that we are all humans and medicine is an art and a privilege to provide. We are part of a patient’s health team.

*Lean In: Women, Work and the Will to Lead*, by Sheryl Sandberg. A great book for women. It helps us realize the limitations we set for ourselves and, more importantly, suggests some solutions.

**The online resource students interested in obstetrics and gynecology should follow:** The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists’ website, where you can also look up your district. There is lots of useful clinical information, as well as social and leadership opportunities.

**Quick insights I would give students who are considering obstetrics and gynecology:** It provides flexibility in lifestyle, practice and clinical options, including surgery.

**Mantra or song to describe life in obstetrics and gynecology:** "Vivir Mi Vida," by Marc Anthony.