

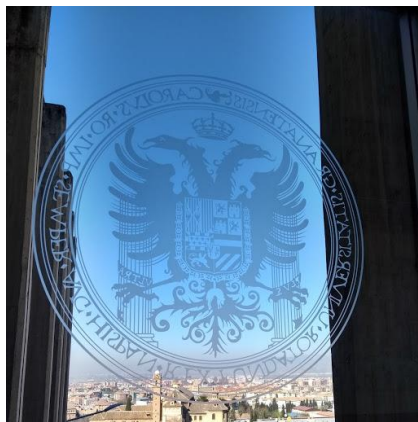
SSA Travel award: Hannah Walsh, Spain, March 2019 report

I travelled to Spain from 11th March – 21st March 2019, with the support of the SSA's travel award. My PhD focuses on tobacco and cannabis co-use, and I'd heard about a working group, EVICT, which has been operating in Spain for several years, bringing together researchers and clinicians with the stated aim of 'untangling the knot of tobacco and cannabis' (www.evictproject.org).

I applied for funding to attend the Comité Nacional para la Prevención del Tabaquismo (CNPT): (national committee for the prevention of tobacco addiction), where EVICT were presenting and also delivering a pre-conference workshop on treatment of co-use. I also used my time in Spain to visit a number of EVICT group members in their place of work, to present my own and to discuss their work further, and to explore the possibility of future collaboration and to learn more about the development of EVICT.

1. University of Granada, Department of Social Anthropology, 12th March 2019

My first stop in Spain was Granada, where I met with Dr Arturo Alvarez Roldan, a founder member of EVICT, and a social anthropologist with an interest in cannabis use. Dr Roldan was able to offer a number of insights into the preliminary findings I presented to him, and suggestions for future analysis of my data. We formulated a plan for a comparative paper using survey data we have both collected on co-use of tobacco and cannabis, and reviewed our respective surveys in some detail to identify areas of overlap. We went on to discuss the context of tobacco and cannabis use in Spain as compared to the UK, and the legislative as well as culture (and climatic) differences which influence how each country has responded to use of tobacco and cannabis.



Granada: The southern Spanish climate allows cannabis to be grown easily, and "grow shops" are legally able to sell seeds, and additional paraphernalia

2. Pre-conference workshop, EVICT group, Toledo, 14th March 2019

From Granada I then travelled to Toledo, just below Madrid, where I met with EVICT group members, and attended a pre-conference workshop focussing on how to treat tobacco dependence for people who co-use cannabis. This workshop presented current data on treatment models and potential treatments, and the discussion on clinical case studies proved

extremely useful and interesting, highlighting the issues that arise in tobacco treatment practice for both specialist and generalist practitioners.

I also had the opportunity to discuss the formation of the EVICT group with various group members, and to understand more about how it continues to develop, and sources of funding used. It was a fantastic and unique opportunity to discuss co-use with a variety of researchers and clinicians who are experienced in both the literature on the topic and in the clinical application of treatment interventions for both tobacco and cannabis treatment seekers.



Toledo, once the capital of Spain

3. Comité Nacional para la Prevención del Tabaquismo (CNPT): National Committee for the prevention of tobacco addiction, Annual meeting, Toledo 15th March 2019

The CNPT annual meeting included a number of relevant sessions, including a presentation on the relative approaches towards e-cigarette use in the UK and in Spain; my PhD supervisor Dr Maria Jose Duaso presented the UK perspective. Attendees were very interested to hear the views of the UK towards e-cigarette use, and I found it very useful to understand more about the Spanish perspective, and how the UK is perceived in its' approach towards e-cigarette use.

I also attended the presentation from EVICT, who described in some detail their work to date on tobacco and cannabis co-use, as well as identifying future directions for research, and their future plans for increased monitoring of tobacco and cannabis co-use, including within existing surveys of both tobacco and cannabis use in Spain.

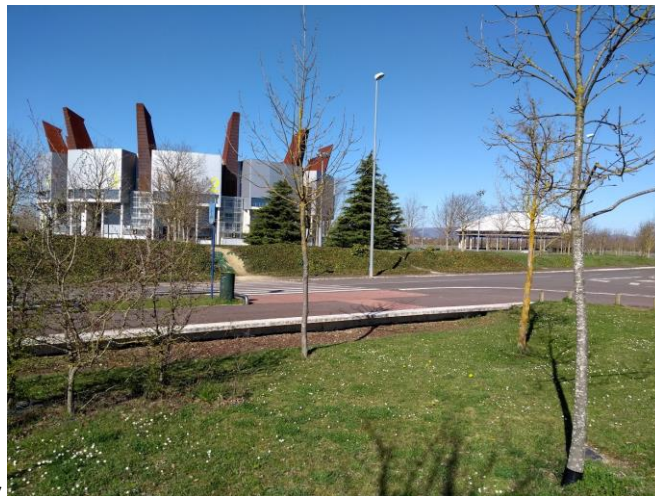
4. Presentation at Tobacco Control department, Institut Catala d'Oncologia (ICO, Catalanian Institute for Oncology), L'Hospitalat Llobregat, Barcelona.

My fourth destination was Barcelona, where at ICO I first met with Dr Cristina Martinez, an associate lecturer and nurse who is working on a number of projects which correlate with my own interests; two in particular which focus on smoking cessation within substance misuse

5. Visit to Dr Joseba Zabala Galan, a public health doctor in the Vitoria-Gasteiz province of the Basque Country.

Dr Zabala (original member of EVICT) works in the police department, and has set up a scheme to provide a psychoeducation intervention to youths who have been arrested for cannabis use, which they can opt to take instead of paying a fine. We discussed the process and content of this intervention, and the motivations of youth towards both tobacco and cannabis use. During my visit, Dr Zabala was able to gather together a group of police officers who worked on the specialist adolescent police team, and I delivered an impromptu presentation of a selection of some of my findings to this group. They were particularly interested in responses to cannabis use, and we discussed the relative merits of various approaches and access to treatment services across Europe; the challenges in addressing cannabis use with this age group and in establishing the potential impact of cannabis use in road traffic incidents.

That afternoon, Dr Zabala invited me to participate in an interactive workshop he was delivering at a local centre for youths with conduct disorders. This was a particularly interesting experience, as Dr Zabala used an innovative and highly interactive approach in the workshop, using the format of a “scientific experiment” to see how much tar was produced by a smoked cigarette. It was a fantastic opportunity to see for myself how the young people responded to such a novel approach, and to understand how potentially useful this distinctive approach might be.



Spring in the Basque country



Workshop debrief

I began my journey in the very hot, arid south of Spain and travelled via two major cities to finish in the green, rain soaked, mountainous north. Overall it was a fascinating experience of understanding more about the country and its' great diversity, and how this diversity has influenced national and regional responses to both tobacco and cannabis use, to providing treatment, and how the distinctive features of the Spanish political, cultural and policy frameworks shape tobacco and cannabis control measures. I thoroughly enjoyed the challenge of discussing my work in a different language, and really welcomed the opportunity to meet with so many co-use researchers. I hope the relationships established will lead to future collaborations on European-wide projects, particularly given the current UK situation.