

ELECTIVE (SSC5c) REPORT (1200 words)

A report that addresses the above four objectives should be written below. Your Elective supervisor will assess this.

I found my time spent within Christchurch hospital, under Otago University highly fulfilling. Not only did it give me a greater appreciation for anaesthesia as a career, but it also allowed me to further explore the breadth of medicine as a career. During my three weeks I divided my time between operating theatres and preadmission clinics, allowing me to further understand the pathway a patient goes through with regards to the Anaesthesia side of the surgical pathway. I learnt the relevant questions to ask prior to surgery in order to limit the risks posed to the patient during anaesthesia. These are posed to every patient undergoing anaesthesia during a preadmission clinic. I noticed the important role the anaesthetists had in calming the patient's nerves in relation to the upcoming medical procedure and answering any questions that the patient had with regards to their treatment. On more than one occasion the Anaesthetist had a key role in tying up loose ends with regards to surgical situations, for example in one case the patient was unaware of which procedure was taking place due to an alteration in the Surgeons opinion. When presented with this the anaesthetist calmed the patient's nerves, and called the surgical team to talk with the patient further. Through this I appreciated the communication required between medical professions in order to maintain a smoothly running hospital.

Anaesthesia is the largest hospital based medical profession in the UK, similarly in New Zealand. This is because of its wide breadth of applications. During my time in New Zealand I was unable to spend any time on the Intensive Care Unit(ICU) or within the emergency department, I believe that this was due to the limited time available to me. I am aware from my time spent with Anaesthetics during my medical training that Anaesthetists have key roles within both of these departments. This highlights the broadness of Anaesthesia as a speciality. Indeed Anaesthesia has many subspecialties within it, including pain control, I have been made aware that there are plans within New Zealand to begin a new training pathway for doctors to specialise only in pain control of patients. I find this a particularly interesting idea as I know that chronic pain is a huge issue for patients and proper control can significantly increase equality of life.

The healthcare system in New Zealand is similar to that in the UK, it is a government based healthcare system which is free at the point of care. Due to the reduced population density in New Zealand and the higher investment per capita into the healthcare system the workload for the Doctors is noticeably reduced, and the options available to the patients are increased. During my time in Christchurch hospital I spent some time with the doctors running the hyperbaric chamber. Found this a very different experience than any I've had outside of New Zealand, I believe that there are 2 hyperbaric chambers within the UK, and both of these are outside of London. Although hyperbaric chambers are of fantastic use when treating divers suffering from the bends, I saw them used mostly to encourage healing of chronic wounds, such as diabetic and pressure ulcers. This is a service that is not yet available in UK, despite the positive results from studies. This is another example of the increased options available to patients using the New Zealand healthcare system. In general, I noticed that patients were both more trusting in the doctors opinions, and I also noticed that the patients

were more likely to put off coming to the Doctors than they are in UK. I believe that this is due to the more rural communities being further away from large hospitals, and for this reason being more reluctant to seek medical advice.

During my time within surgery, I was constantly encouraged to help with the practical side of Anaesthesia. Because of this I was able to further develop the airway skills that I had learnt during my medical training. Due to this positive encouragement I am now more confident in airway management, which is highly useful before I begin my medical career as a foundation year doctor. Managing airways is a key skill when it comes to emergency medicine and resuscitation, although I hope that I will not see any cases throughout my medical training, I know that this training has put me in better stead if faced with a medical emergency on the ward. I was also able to practise cannula insertion, which will be a mainstay of my job as a foundation doctor in Wales. The fantastic encouragement provided to me throughout my time at Christchurch hospital exceeded my expectations of the teaching I would receive during my time in New Zealand. It allowed me to gain confidence in key skills and patient communication and for this reason I know that I feel far more comfortable beginning my foundation job at the end of July.

I came to Christchurch after being present during the 7.8 richter earthquake in Nepal, when I came to Christchurch I mentioned this to the doctors I was placed under. I found that being surrounded by people who had also experienced earthquakes, and had understood how terrifying and dangerous they are, supported me throughout the period. I am extremely thankful for the kindness your staff showed to me and this helped me greatly overcoming my experience. I am very grateful for the learning opportunities and support I have received throughout my time spent at Christchurch university and it is a placement I would gladly recommend to future years.