

ELECTIVE (SSC5a) REPORT (1200 words)

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

My elective experience in emergency medicine in Taiwan was both eye-opening and educational, providing me with valuable insights into the emergency department in Taiwan, the difference in presentation of diseases in Taiwan compared to the UK, the healthcare system differences between Taiwan and the UK, and an opportunity to enhance my Mandarin clinical skills. This reflective essay aims to explore these four objectives through real-life scenarios encountered during my time in Taiwan.

Emergency Department in Taiwan

During my time in the Emergency Department at National Taiwan University, my schedule was dynamic and enriching. I actively participated in lectures alongside Taiwanese students, gaining insights into their medical education system and cultural perspectives on healthcare. Shadowing doctors as they clerked patients provided invaluable hands-on experience, allowing me to witness firsthand the intricacies of patient assessment and care in a different healthcare setting.

Comparing the Emergency Department in Taiwan to those in the UK, I found both similarities and differences. Familiar features such as majors and minors, a resuscitation area, and a triage unit were present, facilitating a sense of continuity in my learning. However, what truly stood out was the remarkable efficiency of the Taiwanese Emergency Department. Patients were attended to promptly, with an average wait time of about 20 minutes to see a doctor. This efficiency was a testament to the organization and effectiveness of the healthcare system, leaving me impressed and inspired by the dedication of the medical professionals I encountered.

Overall, my experience in the Emergency Department at National Taiwan University was not only educational but also eye-opening, providing me with valuable insights into healthcare delivery and systems beyond my own cultural context.

Presentation of diseases in Taiwan

Exploring the medical landscape of Taiwan compared to the UK unveiled fascinating differences in disease presentations and healthcare practices. One notable contrast was the emphasis on toxicology and disaster medicine in Taiwan. Given its geographical location prone to earthquakes, Taiwan places a significant focus on preparing for and managing such disasters. During my elective, I witnessed firsthand the preparedness and efficiency of Taiwanese healthcare professionals in response to the recent earthquake, highlighting the importance of disaster medicine in this region.

Moreover, disease presentations in Taiwan often showcased unique patterns compared to those in the UK. Infectious diseases prevalent in tropical climates, such as dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis, were more commonly encountered. Additionally, toxicological emergencies, including pesticide poisonings and snakebites, received heightened attention, reflecting the local environmental hazards.

Another notable aspect was the utilization of advanced medical technologies like Extracorporeal

Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO) in critical care settings. This advanced life support technique was integrated into patient care more extensively than in the UK, demonstrating Taiwan's commitment to embracing innovative healthcare solutions.

Contrasting Healthcare Systems in Taiwan and the UK

The healthcare systems of the United Kingdom (UK) and Taiwan differ significantly in their organization, funding, and delivery models. The UK's National Health Service (NHS) provides publicly funded healthcare, offering universal coverage to residents, regardless of their ability to pay. This system is characterized by a single-payer model, where the government centrally funds and oversees healthcare provision, ensuring equitable access to services across the population.

In contrast, Taiwan operates a National Health Insurance (NHI) system, which also provides universal coverage but relies on a multi-payer model. Under the NHI, citizens contribute through premiums, while the government subsidizes coverage for low-income individuals. Private insurers also play a role in supplementing coverage, offering additional services and benefits beyond the basic package provided by the NHI.

Moreover, the delivery of healthcare in both countries varies in terms of accessibility, waiting times, and patient experience. While the NHS faces challenges such as long waiting times in emergency departments and primary care, Taiwan's healthcare system is known for its efficiency and accessibility. The NHI in Taiwan emphasizes preventive care, early intervention, and integration of services to promote population health and reduce healthcare disparities.

Despite these differences, both the UK and Taiwan share a commitment to providing high-quality healthcare to their populations, albeit through distinct organizational and financing structures.

Enhancing Mandarin Clinical Skills.

Embarking on my medical elective in Taiwan, I found myself initially perplexed by the linguistic landscape. However, my preparation, including watching YouTube videos on clinical medicine, proved beneficial. As I immersed myself, I was astounded by my progress in Mandarin proficiency, even managing to decipher certain words. One particularly enlightening experience was observing doctors clerking patients in the Emergency Department, where Mandarin and 'TaiYu' were predominantly spoken. This exposure not only honed my language skills but also underscored the importance of linguistic competence in healthcare settings. It became evident that effective communication is vital for patient care, transcending linguistic barriers. My time in Taiwan taught me the significance of adaptability and the power of immersion in mastering a language. Overall, this elective was a transformative journey that enhanced not only my medical knowledge but also my Mandarin skills, equipping me with valuable tools for future patient interactions in diverse healthcare settings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my elective in emergency medicine in Taiwan was a profound learning experience that broadened my understanding of healthcare delivery, disease presentations, healthcare systems, and language proficiency. Immersion in the dynamic environment of the Emergency Department at National Taiwan University provided invaluable insights into healthcare practices beyond my familiar UK context.

Witnessing the efficiency and dedication of Taiwanese medical professionals left a lasting impression, highlighting the importance of adaptability and effective communication in diverse healthcare settings. Overall, this transformative journey enhanced not only my medical knowledge but also my Mandarin skills, equipping me with invaluable tools for future patient interactions in diverse healthcare settings.