

ELECTIVE (SSC5c) REPORT (1200 words)

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

Objective 1: Describe the pattern of disease/illness of interest in the population with which you will be working and discuss this in the context of global health: What are the common presentations in the emergency department in Cape Town and what are the similarities and differences compared to emergency presentations in the UK?

Working in the emergency department at Tygerberg hospital, I split my time between working in the "front room" which mainly dealt with traumatic injury and the medical emergency department which as the title suggests dealt with acute medical problems. The common presentations in trauma were mainly as a result of violent crime or road traffic incidents. This included multiple stab and gunshot wounds and fractures in mainly young adults as well as sports injuries that are commonly seen in the NHS emergency departments. The medical side had a lot acute presentations such as asthma attacks, acute coronary syndrome and TB. With many of these episodes being preempted by poor compliance to medication.

I did my NHS emergency placement at Broomfield hospital, the main trauma I saw on these placements were fractured neck of femurs and Colles fractures usually in older patients with multiple comorbidities related to age such as osteoporosis. Medically many of the conditions were the same as East London, although the incidence of HIV patients were markedly higher.

Objective 2: Describe the pattern of health provision in relation to the country which you will be working and contrast this with other countries, or with the UK: How does the Local South African Health system provide services and how does this compare with the NHS (UK).

The primary care depends on the relative wealth of the population. The lower socioeconomic groups tend to present to local community centres for minor ailments such as colds, whereas higher socioeconomic groups present to general practitioners. When it comes to the hospital presentations the higher socioeconomic groups tend to present for trauma to major government hospitals as they have so much experience dealing with these presentations, but usually get transferred to private hospitals for their rehabilitation. There are also some tertiary care especially in the field such as HIV which is a major burden in this region.

Objective 3: Health related objective: What is the impact of poverty on the types of presentations seen in the emergency department in Cape Town.

Poverty has a major impact on the types of presentation as well as the volume. Many residents of Cape Town live in townships in temporary housing that have high unemployment and high levels of violent crime. These usually make up the majority of the presentations to the trauma department. This also correlated with compliance to medications, with the poor less educated population less likely to take their prescribed medications with any sort of regularity, leading to acute exacerbations of their illnesses. This phenomena is not restricted to South Africa and can also be applied to the UK.

Objective 4: Personal/professional development goals: 1) increase exposure to variety of presentations in the emergency setting, and become more experienced in taking relevant and effective histories

2) increase exposure to variety of clinical skills as well as performing them

1) during this placement I was able to experience both trauma and medical presentations. I was able to assess patients and formulate management plans.

2) on this placement I have performed bloods, ECG's, ABG's , cannulation and suturing.