

ELECTIVE (SSC5b) REPORT (1200 words)

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

Describe the pattern of HIV within Southend and discuss this in the context of global health

Southend is a coastal town in the East of England. For a number of years Southend has had the highest number of people living with HIV in the East of England. It is thought that this is due to the coastal environment attracting a generally larger population, thus more patients. The number of people living with HIV in the town has increased over time. It is thought that this can be attributed to the fact that improved treatment and monitoring of the condition enabling those who are infected to live longer. An issue that appeared to be particularly pertinent during my elective is the idea that the published number of people affected by HIV and AIDS is an underestimation of the actual number of people living with the condition in the area. It was thought that there is an increasing trend of people not being in contact with the HIV services and not receiving treatment because of immigration issues and fear that contact with the NHS would result in deportation from the country. It was thought that this issue was particularly heightened by the brexit vote. I recently read an article that the government is considering using medical notes to find illegal immigrants for deportation. Seeing the effect that the fear of such is having on the management of HIV in Southend has made this quite worrying for me.

Where there have been slight increases in the number of people with HIV in Southend over a number of years, there has been a decrease in the incidence of HIV globally over a similar time. This may be because, as aforementioned, the statistics regarding the number of people in Southend with HIV is governed by the number of people receiving input/treatment from the HIV team, but, The statistics regarding the incidence/prevalence of HIV worldwide is not. Where there are an increasing number of people having access to treatment worldwide, the number of people with HIV is decreasing. The differences in trends in HIV in Southend and worldwide may be attributed to a number of things including differences in life expectancy. A significantly greater proportion of those infected by HIV have access to treatment in Southend compared to many of the countries in the world affected by HIV, thus those infected with HIV in Southend would have a longer life expectancy.

Describe the pattern of health provision in the UK compared to Grenada

In the UK, largely all public healthcare is free at the point of care. There are options to access private care, which requires payment, but otherwise the world class healthcare available in the UK is free. In Grenada they also have free healthcare, however, not all aspects of the healthcare are free. Though patients are able to see healthcare professionals for free, all of

the drugs required for their care need to be purchased at a pharmacy away from the hospital and brought back to be used for treatment. This is usually done by family members or people within the community.

Another thing that was quite interesting about the health provision in Grenada is the relatively low use of public hospitals and the affordability and high use of private hospitals amongst Grenadians tourists. In the UK one of the main reasons a patient would opt to go private is to receive treatment with a greater expediency than that offered publically or receive treatment that the governing bodies in the UK deemed to have a poor quality adjusted life year. In Grenada, there was a consensus that the quality of the treatment in public hospitals were poor and patients opted to attend private hospitals for an initial assessment and an assessment of the affordability of the treatment they required at the private hospital before going to the public hospitals as a last resort.

What initiatives are in place to increase HIV testing in the UK compared to Grenada?

In Grenada they have specific campaigns to raise awareness of HIV and HIV testing particularly on world AIDS day, the most recent being a "Hands up" where the Ministry of Health worked in conjunction with a number of charities to decrease stigma towards HIV by encouraging people to write encouraging messages on their palms. The country also has a department in the Ministry of Health called "The National Infectious Disease Control Unit" that predominantly works on matters concerning sexual health and HIV. This department works continuously to increase testing for HIV amongst Grenadians. Their efforts have resulted in a 300% increase in the number of people being tested in Grenada.

Similarly to Grenada, campaigns are run in the UK to encourage people to get tested, the most popular being "It starts with me" an organisation that encourages people to get tested and offers them free self-sampling HIV kits. Another initiative is the National HIV testing week run by HIV prevention England. In the UK, many of the campaigns are particularly aimed at high-risk populations, i.e. men who have sex with men. This isn't something that is particularly used in Grenada, most likely because male on male homosexuality is illegal in Grenada.

Another initiative used in the UK to increase testing is to offer a HIV testing as part of an everyday sexual health screen on a patient.

Improve my ability to use a microscope to detect common sexually acquired micro-organisms.

I felt that I had very limited experience using a microscope over my medical school career, thus was keen to practise and further develop my microscopy skills within this elective. In keeping with my previous experiences using a microscope, I initially found it quite hard to focus the microscope on the correct part of the prepared slides. However, I was

fortunate enough to get a plethora of tips from the experienced nurses within the clinic who helped me overcome that. The tips alongside practise has resulted in a significant improvement in my microscopy skills.