

ELECTIVE (SSC5b) REPORT (1200 words)

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

I carried out my electives in Gozo, Malta. I enjoyed every second of my time in Gozo. I gained a lot from Gozo General Hospital. I had the opportunity to be under the wing of Dr. Robert Sciberras and his team. They made me feel extremely welcome from the very beginning which put me at ease and made me feel very comfortable. I was introduced to the consultants in each department on the first day itself which then made them aware that there were a few students in the hospital carrying out our electives, this made it a lot easier for us to organise the areas of medicine we wanted to experience in the six weeks that we were there. Gozo General Hospital is a rather small hospital in comparison to all the other hospitals I have had my placements in. This meant that I had the opportunity to move around in different areas of the hospital instead of only carry out my electives in emergency medicine as I originally planned to. The Emergency department was rather quiet on the whole. To put things in perspective, the population of Gozo is 31446 compared to London which has a population of 8.6million. I carried out my student selected component in imaging in emergency medicine at the Royal London Hospital. It was after that I decided to carry out my electives in the same field in order to be able to compare the use of imaging in the emergency department in London and Gozo. I found it rather difficult to make a comparison purely because of the variation in the cases seen in the emergency department in both hospitals. Dr. Robert Sciberras, the consultant who was in charge of the students carrying out their electives at the hospital is a consultant in general medicine. We spent a lot of time in clinics and on the wards with Dr. Sciberras and his team. I found that to be particularly useful as Dr. Sciberras would give us a lot of teaching along the way. The objectives of my elective naturally shifted a bit when I got to Gozo General Hospital due to the aforementioned factors. However, I did also observe and get involved in a lot of ultrasounds and echocardiograms with Dr. Sciberras and Dr. Pavlov, the radiologist at Gozo General Hospital. I was given the opportunity to learn and improve my echocardiogram technique on patients. I could see the improvement within myself in those six weeks.

I shall address objectives 1 and 2 together in this paragraph. The healthcare system in Malta is very similar to the healthcare system in the UK. The pathways and protocols are the same. So imaging modalities like ultrasound, x-rays, CT scans and MRIs are widely used in emergency medicine in Gozo General Hospital just like they are used in the Royal London Hospital. The use of these imaging modalities speed up the process between seeing a patient and making a diagnosis in order to treat the patient. For example, an 82 year old gentleman was involved in a road traffic accident with rather serious injuries to his lower limbs. He was sent directly to have an MRI and was seen by the surgeons in no time at all once they realised that the blood supply to his left lower limb had been severed.

Addressing objective number three, emergency medicine is approached in a very similar manner to England in Gozo. The triage nurses take down the patient details first and then they are seen by the doctor. But as previously mentioned, Gozo General Hospital is a very small hospital and the population of Gozo is very small, so the scene in the emergency department is completely different to what I was used to in London. There is a certain aura of calmness that remains even in the emergency department and I am guessing this is due to the

smaller load of people that the hospital sees on a day to day basis. In fact, I myself was a patient in Gozo General Hospital on the very first day that I landed in Gozo. I suffered a terrible tooth abscess and was in an immense amount of pain, so I had to be taken to the A + E late at night by my colleague. I was pleasantly surprised by how quickly I was seen by the doctor and also the fact that I was the only patient there.

I learnt a lot about general medicine which was not part of my initial objectives however, I would definitely like to include a little bit of that in my report too. The way I learnt medicine from Dr. Sciberras was very interesting. It made me ask myself 'why' with all the decisions I made with respect to medicine. I remember making it a conscious decision to do so when I started off with my medical degree, it was a pleasant reminder. Knowing the answers isn't the end game, knowing how to get there is. I also truly enjoyed the little stories and facts that Dr. Sciberras shared with us throughout the elective period. I learnt so much about the history of Malta just through conversations with Dr. Sciberras. I was very impressed by the kind of doctor that Dr. Sciberras is and I would like to be a great doctor and a fountain of knowledge just like he is.

Moving on to objective number 4, this is where I could write pages and pages on how this elective period has made grow personally and professionally. Firstly, I succeeded in obtaining my advanced diving license which was one of my top short term goals. It was a terrifying experience at some point when I did a wreck dive at 30m, but I managed to overcome that fear. That meant a lot to me because I had previously experienced a rather frightening experience while diving when i was in Greece a year ago and this was basically a test that I put myself through to break through that fear and I succeeded. Besides that, Gozo is such a different place compared to London. It has a much slower pace and just seemed to be a lot more calm. I was able to create a routine for myself that I fell in love with. It consisted of yoga first thing in the morning on roof top of the house we were staying before having a good breakfast and then heading off to the hospital. I have incorporated it into my everyday life now and have been able to keep it up through my student assistantship so far. My professional development has grown alongside my personal development. I definitely feel more confident as a doctor and want to be the best doctor I can be. I want to be a well rounded, well read doctor with good bedside manner.