

## **ELECTIVE (SSC5b) REPORT (1200 words)**

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

For my medical school elective, I undertook a research project in London after my initial plans to go to Columbia University did not transpire the way I had hoped. I therefore initiated a systematic review on the therapeutic management of Erosive Pustular Dermatitis of the Scalp (EPDS). The project is being supervised by Dermatology Consultants based at the Royal London Hospital, Dr Bhargava and Prof Harwood. I developed an interest in the field early in my medical education, thus undertook my final year student selected component (SSC) in Dermatology. During this time I met a patient with EPDS, and followed him through his treatment journey.

Upon reading about the condition further, I realised that no specific management guidelines were available for EPDS, a common but scarcely reported skin condition. As a result, I suggested conducting a systematic review of the literature in an effort to publish evidence-based guidance for clinicians treating patients with EPDS in the UK and around the world. The consultants I approached were very encouraging and supported the initiative. When I learned that I would not be attending Columbia University, I opted to continue the systematic review for my elective.

During the project, I have worked with two doctors (Dr Jonathan Kentley and Dr Mansi Rajpopat) based at the Royal London Hospital's Dermatology department, as well as a senior advisor (Firouz Mustapha) from the British Association of Dermatologists (BAD). The project is now well underway, as we have crossed the screening stages of the articles and are now beginning the full text review and data extraction process. I plan to continue the project to completion, even after my elective period is over.

Through my involvement with this project, I have learned more about EPDS, what aspects of the disease are most troublesome for patients and how doctors monitor the disease process, course and resolution. More importantly I have been able to further polish my methodological skill in conducting systematic reviews. I am now more confidently able to devise a protocol for a review, conduct a thorough search strategy and extract data appropriately.

The global health impact of our work is that this project will eventually lead to a publication that will provide easily accessible and reliable guidance for clinicians treating patients with EPDS. As a systematic review is considered one of the highest levels of evidence, we hope that this project will provide the necessary groundwork needed to develop best practice guidance for the management of EPDS patients in the UK (and possibly, in other parts of the world).