

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

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

Queens hospital, Romford, is one of the largest providers of maternity services in the UK, and provides care to over 9,000 women each year. This care includes prenatal, antenatal and postnatal care to ensure the best possible outcome for mother and child. The hospital has numerous onsite facilities available including a day assessment unit, to provide basic checks for the mother and the baby. The hospital has an excellent birth centre, dedicated to provide an environment to deliver a successful, uncomplicated birth, assisted by experienced midwives and doctors if need be. They also have an excellent labour ward to give birth in the hospital and to ensure that the patient is monitored throughout labour. There are also dedicated antenatal clinics to support women through pregnancy and as a whole facilities at this hospital are excellent.

The antenatal care that Queens hospital provide is very thorough, aimed at identifying and managing high-risk pregnancies to ensure that they go as smoothly as possible. One of the concerns with patients in this area is diabetes. Diabetes is prevalent in this society, and so there are specialist run clinics aimed at managing patients with pre-existing diabetes and those with gestational diabetes. These clinics are led by an obstetric consultant assisted by specialist diabetic nurses that, together, provide assistance in managing diabetic control throughout pregnancy. Ultimately, it is the patients' responsibility to control their sugar levels, but with this support, they are more successful in doing so.

The hospital also tries to identify those patients at risk of diabetes in pregnancy dependant on factors including, but not limited to, a previous macrosomic baby, previous gestational diabetes and obesity. These patients are offered a glucose tolerance test, results of which determine whether a patient needs further support in diabetic control. This ensures that both mother and baby are cared for throughout pregnancy for a successful and manageable delivery.

Obstetric complications of pregnancy that can arise during pregnancy are managed, I believe, really well within this hospital. For example, there is a dedicated triage service especially for pregnant mothers, which is open 24 hours a day, and staffed by experienced obstetric staff. My experience of this is that it is a very busy, but a very effective service, that helps pregnant women, as well as reducing the workload on the emergency department within the hospital. Here, I saw how different conditions are managed; from pelvic pain, to per vaginal bleeding, ectopic pregnancies and miscarriages. Antenatal clinics pre-empt obstetric complications such as intrauterine growth restrictions, macrosomia, and rhesus status, and on the labour ward, there are dedicated staff that observe and monitor the health of the mother and the foetus, and meticulously plan the pregnancy and any complications that may arise. This is a wonderful and well-run service.

The promotion of good health during pregnancy is a hot topic within the UK at this time. Not only does maintaining good health during pregnancy help to provide the best possible outcome for mother and baby, there is also an element of this being cost effective. With the NHS struggling with debt year on year, NHS staff are encouraged to do all they can to help patients with maintaining good health throughout pregnancy, to help to minimise any complications that may arise, which could, in the long term, become more costly to the NHS. So patients are provided with a plethora of reading material and are given advice on what to eat and what to avoid, encouraged to exercise daily, and even promote a more holistic view in health management, including yoga and deep breathing exercises.

Smoking is also a major concern that can affect foetal development, and I witnessed first-hand, how NHS staff encourage patients to stop smoking, providing information as to the reasons why, and also providing support by way of smoking cessation clinics. I was pleased to know that this occurs as I believe that it does benefit women and also the NHS as a whole.

Those that have other existing health concerns, such as epilepsy, are managed through specialist clinics with experienced consultants that can provide information and support for pregnant women.

My elective at Queens hospital was very varied and I thoroughly enjoyed my placement here. It may not have been as glamorous as other colleagues of mine; going away to exotic countries and experiencing how other countries manage maternity care, but I believe I gained a valuable insight into how maternity care is managed within the UK - something that will be useful throughout my career. I have been interested in obstetrics for a while now, and was keen to develop my knowledge into the day-to-day activities in a career in obstetrics. I am encouraged to note that after my elective, my interest, and knowledge for a career in obstetrics has grown.

I enjoyed the experience I gained talking to patients and their families about their experiences in this and other pregnancies. Even though there are time pressures involved regarding maternity care within the hospital environment, I felt that each pregnancy was managed as though it was unique to the NHS staff, as much as it was unique to the woman and their families involved. It felt like no one was dismissive when any concerns arose from the pregnancy, no matter how trivial the concern may have seemed to the patient. I also enjoyed gaining experience of ultrasound scanning in pregnancy, a skill that I believe is poorly taught in my undergraduate degree. I feel as though having knowledge and experience of ultrasound scanning is a vital tool in managing expectant mothers, and I would definitely incorporate this aspect of medicine should I be lucky enough to enter a career in obstetrics. In fact, in any speciality of medicine, the knowledge of ultrasound scanning is a tool that is very useful in determining diagnosis and management of patients, and I will ensure that I gain as much knowledge and experience as possible in this field.

What I really learnt from this elective and enjoyed the most was that I was able to learn from my experiences and incorporate it into my own personal life. As a newly expectant first time father, I was able to gain more experience in to the process of antenatal maternity support. For example, I was able to confidently interpret the results obtained from our own screening tests from the information and experience gathered during my elective in how to interpret others. I was also able to explain these results and I felt as though this made my wife more relaxed. I was also able to help my wife with explaining more about what to expect during pregnancy, and be able to fully answer any questions she had during the pregnancy. I feel as though this elective has helped immensely in my own experiences in our current pregnancy, which can only be a good thing.

Overall I had a superb time during my elective and would encourage any student interested in obstetrics to take part in this elective; and will come out more experienced and more confident in how a career in obstetrics works, and what subspecialties there are in this exciting and interesting field.