

ELECTIVE (SSC5b) REPORT (1200 words)

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

The population of Tower Hamlets ranges widely in ethnicity and socioeconomic background. This offers the chance to see very different cases, both in their understanding at attitude towards pregnancy, and in the pathologies which affect them. Being placed at the Royal London Hospital gave me an opportunity to see a large volume and variety of pathologies which I wouldn't have at different areas. These include ectrodactyly and oesophageal atresia. It is, however, difficult to describe the pattern of disease in the population after only three weeks of placement. In the cases I saw, the vast majority were completely healthy women and fetuses. The most common pathological reason for fetal assessments was maternal diabetes. This may be a reflection of the high proportion of people of South East Asian descent as, for instance, it has the highest Bangladeshi population in England.

There are several services revolving around pregnancy available at the Royal London, which are all integrated quite seamlessly. Patients have access to antenatal care and checks and to ultrasound with the sonographers in the department. In cases where abnormalities are picked up, further ultrasound scanning can be offered medical specialists, and consultant follow up for more complex cases. Beyond ultrasound, other diagnostic tests can also be offered. This includes screening for abnormalities such as trisomy 21 and invasive tests such as chorionic villus sampling. The department also has an Emergency Gynae Unit where patients with gynaecological disorders are referred to for acute problems. It is where early miscarriages are managed. As expected, there is also a delivery suite and specialist obstetric theatres in the department. These facilities allow for induction, instrumental deliveries, and caesarean sections to be conducted, depending on clinical need. In addition to these, there is an obstetric high dependency unit for mothers requiring extra physiological support or monitoring and a neonatal unit for babies born prematurely or needing support. During my placement I also had the chance to appreciate the range of clinics offered for both obstetrics (ante and postnatal), and gynaecology (such as menstrual disorders, oncology, pelvic floor dysfunction, among others). These services are integrated with the other healthcare needs of the patients and input from several professionals (such as the patient's GP and paediatrics) are considered in complex cases. Patients also have ready access to advocates and translators to ensure they can fully engage with the services. As mentioned previously, the population of Tower Hamlets is very ethnically diverse, with two thirds of the population being ethnic minorities. This makes these services incredibly important in this area. The health initiatives in obstetrics are in line with those offered nationally, including ultrasound; screening for blood-borne infections such as HIV and Hepatitis B; fetal abnormalities; and pre-eclampsia and maternal diabetes. In the postnatal period, the newborn blood spot test is conducted and a full examination of the child is done by the paediatric services. Help and advice for post-natal care of the child and breastfeeding is also available to the mothers.

This was a supremely interesting placement. It gave me the chance to see a wide range of conditions and procedures that I wouldn't have access to otherwise. These included a range of different delivery techniques. I spent a significant portion of the placement seeing how and why fetal ultrasound scans are conducted. As such I learnt a lot about the practice and potential of ultrasound scanning; as well as its diagnostic limitations. This placement also gave me the opportunity to speak to several patients about their conditions and their experience with health services. This experience was incredibly helpful as pregnancy and childbirth tend to be quite a sensitive time for the patient and their

immediate social environment. It is therefore important to have insight into how patients might be feeling and what might be worrying them. Lastly, all members of the team were incredibly friendly, welcoming, and receptive to students. This made this placement quite a rich learning experience and a very enjoyable period. It also gave me the chance to ask medical professionals at different stages of training about career progression and subspecialties in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.