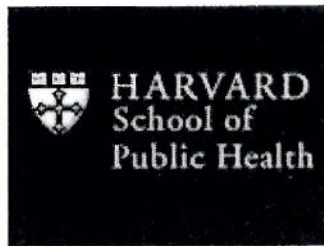


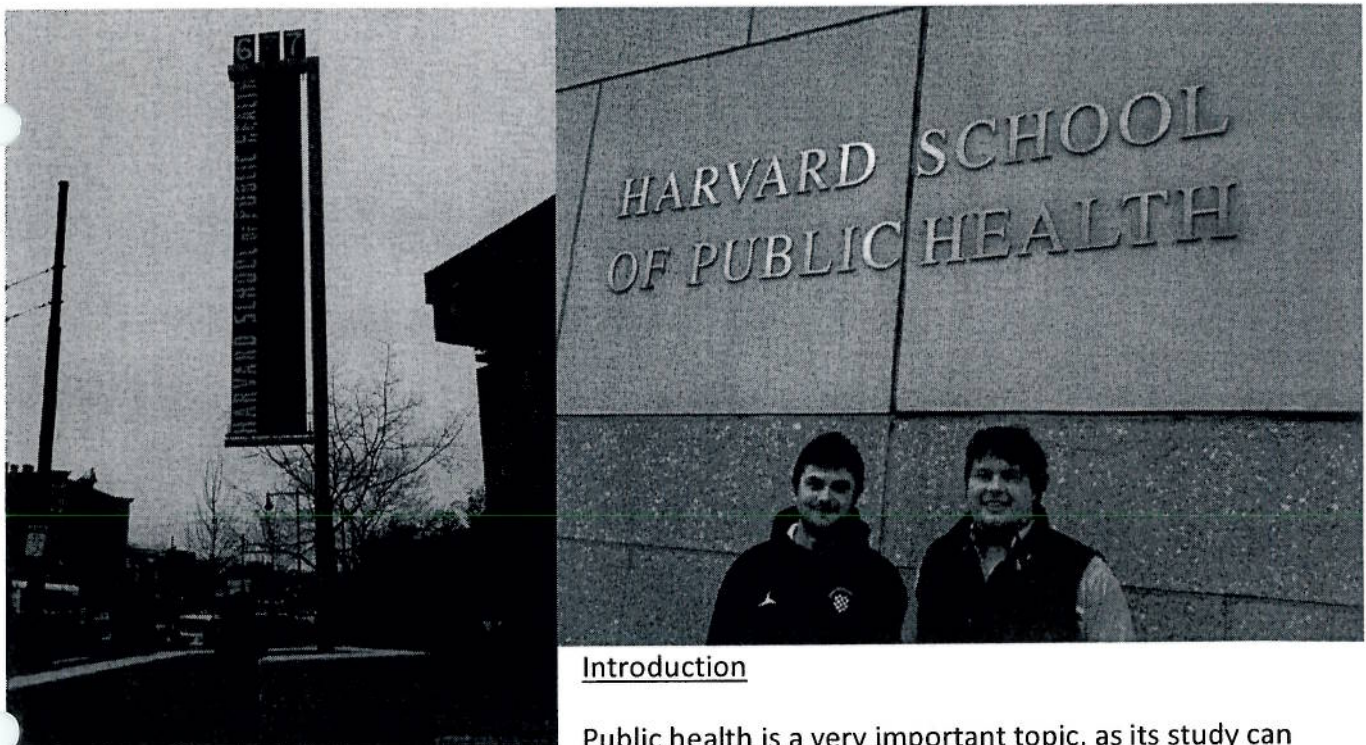
ACCIDENT

EMERGENCY



Anthony Thaventhiran Elective Report

Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH)



Introduction

Public health is a very important topic, as its study can help prevent the spread of many diseases, and influence what treatment/ drugs should be instigated to ensure the best survival for patients and the population in general. If carried out effectively the research it provides and the recommendations carried out, can ensure the survival of millions of patients. Harvard is one of the largest schools in public health in the world and whose overarching mission is in the advancement through "discovery, learning and communication". It provides both education to all public health practitioners and their leaders, as well as help to discover new improvements in health which can be used in the US as well as the world. They also help to strengthen the capacities and services for local US communities as well as the world, and help to create a forum for public debate, to increase the awareness of health of the public.

Public health is of course a multidisciplinary field where health practitioners work together. HSPH helps to work on the most pressing diseases of our times, such as AIDs, heart disease

and cancer. Through this elective I hoped to gain a better understanding of the core fundamentals that underlie public health, such as bio-statistics and epidemiology and a little experience of hospital care in America.

Travel

Getting to Harvard, my colleagues Alexander Jones, Carl Frampton and my self decided to stop off for 3 days in Madrid and 3 in New York. Madrid was an enchanting city full of culture and beauty. Here we were able to meet up with some other medical students from Spain, who we had met whilst they were doing their own



medical elective's in Southend Hospital. It was nice to meet further medical colleagues from a different country, to discuss how our medical education differed and its similarities. They also helped us undertake in the local tapas/ drinking tradition of the city, and help enjoy the nightlife of Madrid.

Following a horrendous 8 hour flight to New York, where only one disserviceably shoddy film was played, and the stewardesses refused to answer the call-button. (We later found out that this was because the Queen of Spain was travelling on the same flight as us, which meant we had to remain on the plane once it landed for an hour, while she was safely whisked away.)



Once in New York we spend a few days taking in the sight of Broadway, the Statton Island ferry, Statue of Liberty and many other touristy things. Whilst there, we were also able to meet up with another

Barts Medical student who had just started her elective here. It was very interesting on

getting her perspective of work in the US, and the state she found the healthcare system in general in treating both the rich Americans with the most comprehensive private insurance, and those who could afford none, and had to literally sell their homes in order to afford treatment.



Finally after a half day travelling on a bus we arrived at Boston, and immediately after dumping our bags in a hostel we travelled to meet our tutor, and have a guided tour around Harvard Square. Here we were able to further discuss our project and to learn slightly more about the important work our tutor does, his day-to-day routine, and a brief introduction to healthcare in the US.

Work



Once work started the following day, we went to Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston and spend a day in the Accident and Emergency department there. It was very interesting observing that despite the country being the richest of the world, its health care provision was extremely lacking. Many patients did not have the American equivalent of a General Practitioner, a family doctor. Instead they would often take advice from their local pharmacist, and then tried to put-up with their condition. Only once they could no longer tolerate their condition would they present to A&E, where all hospitals were obliged to treat all patients, irrespective of their insurance status. What resulted was that the A&E apart from being

full of the usual cases you would see in the UK, there would also be many other patients who came in simply complaining of conditions such as a ear ache, that would be treated in the UK by a GP.

Later then when walking on the streets it was obvious that there were a lot of medical conditions that people were not being treated for. On discussing with our tutor further, we discovered that many people can not afford to take the time off work, or can afford the treatment to get themselves fixed. Generally preventative medicine does not really exist for much of middle America, who receive little help with health cost. Most wait until they

are in their 60s when health care becomes free. But at this stage most of the damage caused by the disease has already been done. It was interesting to learn that our tutor had to pay \$500 each month for private health care for him and his family. But on the other side the taxes and wages in the US are world's apart from those here.

The health care provisions though in general were for those few who could afford it better than what you could expect in the UK. It is just unfortunate that more people in the US can not benefit from the many advances that are occurring within the US, in terms of trauma management.

Personally I loved visiting the US, but I would find it very difficult to live there permanently due to the state of their health care. It is very interesting learning how the country copes, and I think that I have learnt personally more about myself about how much I care about the level of treatment that the patient I treat receive. To end out elective we looked more at the statistics of health care outcomes in Massachusetts General Hospital compared to a London hospital. The results which are very interesting and we are hoping to publish a paper out of the research which we carried out.

I think that this is a very interesting elective which other student would benefit from. It gives a brief but broad spectrum account of the healthcare of the US and how it compared to the UK, and I would recommend it to other students. On top of this it is set in beautiful Boston, where there is so much to do, and many local areas where you can travel to. Namely Cape Cod (where JFK was born), Washington DC, and onwards...

