

## Elective Report

By Hack Jae Lee

I have undertaken 5 weeks of elective at Royal London Hospital which is based in Whitechapel, London. It is one of the largest hospitals in the UK and treats over 1400 injury patients annually producing some of the best clinical outcomes in the whole of UK. It is also the home to London's busiest A and E. The new hospital opened in 2010 providing Londoners with world-class trauma care. I had the privilege to be part of the orthopaedics team led by Mr. Barry who works closely with the trauma team. The team of surgeons have a day dedicated to both adult and children trauma cases dealing mainly with broken, dislocated or deformed limbs.

London, especially east London is extremely multicultural. There are people from all over the world which exposed me to a myriad of clinical presentations - as some problems are more common in certain ethnicity; such as varus deformities being more common in children from the Far East. It was also interesting to see the change in common orthopaedic presentations across the ages such as small babies to young children to adults and beyond. I found that a lot of the children who come to the clinics come not only because they have broken/fractured a bone somewhere but because they need to correct a congenital, developmental or acquired deformity. For example, I saw numerous children coming in for follow up check-ups for club feet and hip dysplasias which is congenital, removal of nails few weeks after surgery from injury and kyphosis which corrected as the infant developed.

In adults, I found that a lot of the cases were either due to accidental and non-accidental injuries, degenerative issues or self-inflicted. A lady had come in with a calcaneal fracture after trying to take her life and some suffered horrific road traffic injuries which all had to be quickly dealt with. There are also a lot of hip replacements being carried out due to an increasing number of elderly people who are living longer and have arthritic changes in their hips. An interesting part of my elective was that one of the suspects from the recent shootings had come in to the theatres next to where I was which was frightening but also the number of armed police men guarding the entrance was also intimidating but was of an interesting experience.

I believe across the world, presentations relating to trauma and orthopaedics would be similar. The only difference that there may be is the fact that in some poorer countries, the children who have congenital or developmental problems such as aforementioned may not be able to correct such deformities. I also believe that many of the patients with severe injuries may die from poor facilities and through post-surgical infections.

I was given the chance to scrub up regularly and take part in surgery by helping hand over the equipment, hold the instruments so that the surgeons can have better vision and helping with suction. It may not be much in terms of my contribution, but it was definitely much more entertaining and interesting than observing from a few meters away. In clinics, I found myself to be much more useful as I was able to do a lot of the hip and knee examinations under the supervision of the registrars or the consultant. It was extremely helpful to go over some of the examinations that

had come up in the exams and to remind myself how to perform the examination under supervision. On some days, I would visit the wards where I would help share some of the work load with the CTs. I would go and clerk the patient before the doctor would see them and present my findings to the doctor. I feel that I have been given a lot of opportunities during the electives by all members of the MDT to be felt as part of the team. I have been able to apply a lot of knowledge I have built up over the years and reinforce my learning through the elective. Some of my main goals for this elective were to prepare myself and be ready for august when I will actually start having to make decisions and choices independently. Although I was unable to go abroad for my electives, I feel I have had an amazing time here at RLH in an orthopaedics attachment.