

APPENDIX 4: SSC 5c (Elective) Assessment - Reflection (part2)**Name:** Rafid Sikafi**Dates of elective:** 29/04/13 – 31/05/13**Elective address:** City Hospital , Dubai , U.A.E**Elective contact / Supervisor:** Mohammed Elhowairis**Contact address / Telephone / E-mail of elective placement:****Subject:** Urology**Was it what you expected?**

Yes. During my final year of university I was fortunate to have the opportunity to attend the SSC module abroad and work with Dr El howairis and his wonderful team. That's when I knew straight away that I wanted to follow up on the experience with my elective period.

Clinical experience?

Shadowing of a consultant urologist which included ward rounds , theatre(observing only) , weekly multidisciplinary meetings ,specialised teaching sessions tailored to our objectives . History taking and clinical examinations were the main stay of the practical side of the clinical experience

What did you learn about the people and the country?

Having lived in Dubai for 18 years I can safely say that I share the same mentality with the general population i.e. nothing was foreign to me. Dubai is a smaller, more diverse London. Everybody talks about how cosmopolitan London is but communities are segregated in a sense while with Dubai they are all mixed together on the same street. With a huge population of expats (the Emiratis compose 9% of the population) it accommodates to all cultures and all religions making it extremely effortless to settle in and feel at home. With the conflict in the middle east and the Arab spring (uprising) , Dubai is the safe haven of the middle east. Taking advantage of their integral place in the region they have seen a huge boom in their economy with new places opening by the day meaning there's always something to do/see.

What did you learn about the health care professionals you worked with?

The majority of hospitals in Dubai (apart from one or two) have no structured training schemes in place meaning if you graduate from medical school and move directly you face a dead end in terms of progress in your career. Not having many junior doctors/ registers to train due to the flawed system, they jumped at the chance to further educate fresh graduates and share their knowledge and experience, it almost felt like it was a privilege for them. They were very kind, patient and enthusiastic. They understood that we were fresh graduates and tailored their teaching towards what we thought was beneficial and involved us in the whole process.

What did you learn about the health care system in that country?

Health care system is massively different in the Middle East especially in the United Arab Emirates. With the public sector only available to the locals, the rest of the population rely on private health care meaning the less fortunate population are turned away if they are unable afford the astronomical costs of healthcare. There is no primary care in the U.A.E making it difficult to see the right person for the problem and not having that availability of a GP you tend to neglect you own health. Not having the consistency and familiarity of a regular GP you lose that safety net. Having said that, there is a new push for GP,s in Dubai and I do see a future in the matter but it does need a national reform. They pride themselves with excellent consultant led health centres all over the city with world renowned doctors from all the parts of the world.

What were the best bits?

Having one of my good friends in medical school join me on my elective and being the tour guide/chaperone was enjoyable especially since I have bored him for the past 5 years with many stories of how great Dubai can be. Being able to communicate medical terms in a different language was harder then i anticipated but thoroughly enjoyed the challenge and learnt many techniques observing the consultant sincere approach.

What were bits you least enjoyed?

Seeing as the health care is private and consultant led, we were not able to perform practical procedures and quite limited in terms of hands on experience which was a huge disappointment. Being used to a certain system and standard it was

Were there any shortcomings?

The amount of practical work was limited and were not able to get involved in any surgeries

Would you recommend it to another student?

Definitely. Everyone is extremely helpful and they thoroughly enjoyed having us around. They made us feel part of the team and involved us in the decision making process .They also set up workshops which were very helpful and devoted a significant amount of time to carefully explain the topics we struggled with. The beautiful weather alone made it worth it but in general there are many places to see (and eat) and is a great place to visit.

Would you do anything differently?

Having lived there for most of my life i would have liked to experience a different health care in a less developed country where sources are scarce and been able to compare different health care systems in different regions

What did you learn about yourself?

I learnt that I can be empathetic with patients without even realising it especially since the locals are quite expressive. I can adapt to different situations and make the best of what I have and able to balance work with pleasure (an area I found difficult in the past). The amount of respect that was given to us was overwhelming at times.

Where there any deviations from the risk assessment?

No

How was your accommodation?

Living with my family in a town house with a garden and a pool was more than I could have asked for although for future students the hotels are extravagant, cheap and very comfortable. The home cooked meals, fresh sheets and clean clothes were the highlight of the trip really.

How were your travel arrangements?

Travel arrangements were straightforward with many airlines flying to Dubai with many good packages online to choose from. Having my licence and knowing the area helped quite significantly as a means to getting around which can be difficult for a foreigner.