

Elective Report

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DIABETES

My elective took place in Banarsidas Chandiwala hospital in Kalkaji, New Delhi. Banarsidas Chandiwala hospital is a specialist centre in Diabetes and so that formed the mainstay of my clinical experience, however they also have both general medical and surgical clinics. Diabetes in India has become a big problem and the World Health organisation have deemed the prevalence of diabetes in India is higher than both the USA and China; India has been termed the 'Diabetes capital of the world.'

The first noticeable difference in the healthcare systems between India and the UK is that in India the majority of people use the private sector, government hospitals do exist but due to the huge population in India they are unable to provide care for everyone, so patients prefer to spend money to see a consultant a lot quicker. This leads to a very different style of consultation, whereas in the UK patients want to see their doctor the very next day if possible, in India patients prefer to wait longer as they know the costs it entails.

The other thing I did notice was that once a procedure had been asked for or for example a surgery to be done, it was done almost straight. There was no waiting times of six/seven week backlog till an available to operating list, the surgery was booked and as long as the patient was stable it was done immediately. Initially this was odd to comprehend as I'm so used to patients bemoaning the wait for an essential surgery but here, if the patient had the money, the operation was booked.

Banarsidas Chandiwala hospital does not charge for the patient's initial appointment however subsequent appointments and treatment do need to be paid for. Simple blood tests are done, including full blood count, urea and electrolytes, liver function tests and lipid profile to name a few, once that's that completed, other tests such as ECG, imaging and foot pressure and Doppler evaluation are undertaken. In this sense the management of diabetes is similar to the UK, where a history and further investigations are done to gain a full understanding of the patient's current state and to assess their future risk to diabetic complications.

This is further assessed by an ophthalmological and podiatrist review, alongside advice with a nutritionist to aid in reducing intake of foods that can cause more problems for the patient. Once again this is similar to diabetic control and management in the UK, where there is multi-disciplinary approach, however in the UK we have multi-disciplinary meetings where members of the team get together to discuss the cases, I did not witness this on my elective, it was up to the patient to inform each member of the team individually what had been told to

them from the other healthcare professional. This sort of approach can lead to problems, of which I witnessed, on occasions, during my time there, where patients would be unable to explain fully what was told to them and this may have impacted on their management.

Once all this initial assessment had been done by the hospital, patients were then asked to come back, initially, after three months using their HBA1c level as an indicator of how their treatment plan had been working and changes to medication are done as required. Visits to the nutritionist and podiatrist are arranged as required to help reinforce the management plan and also to keep the diabetes under control.

Whilst I was at Banarsidas Chandiwala hospital, I was able to see some late presentations of the disease and thus enabled me to improve my medical knowledge on the condition. From studying in the UK, I have seen that most healthcare professionals are very pro-active and thus try to prevent their patients from getting diabetes in the first place, with various measures done including weight loss and lifestyle changes. Whilst this also happens in India, due to the sheer size of the population and the fact that access to healthcare is very limited if you do not have enough money, leads to patients presenting later with more complications that are not seen that often in the UK.

My overall time spent at Banarsidas Chandiwala hospital was one of a great experience, I was able to practise my history taking skills and improve my communication skills. I was also able to perform some practical skill such as blood pressure measurements and clinical examinations including the cardio and respiratory examinations. I was able to see signs that I had read about in textbooks allowing me to strengthen my knowledge of certain areas.