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Dubai Elective report

Describe the pattern of disease/illness of interest in Dubai and in the context of global health?

Dubai is one of the seven Emirates, which make up the United Arab Emirates. It is a newly developed country, being first established in 1971. Due to the increased wealth and high standard of living, there has been a drastic shift from communicable diseases to chronic conditions over the last 20 years in the country. However there is a large expat community from a variety of countries with different healthcare needs, ranging from tropical infections to disease of old age.

Describe the pattern of health provision in Dubai in contrast with the UK?

Dubai has a highly developed healthcare system providing private healthcare to those who can afford it. Unlike the UK there is no national healthcare. Patients receive healthcare via two main avenues, they either attend specialised private secondary healthcare clinics or attend Hospitals A and E department. As there is a lack of primary healthcare in Dubai, with majority of individuals being part of the expat community, the healthcare system is focused on treatable not preventive healthcare. From my time in Dubai I became very aware in the discrepancy between the levels of care provided in different hospitals; this in turn reflected the divergence of the healthcare provided to those with different socio-economic status.

To understand common urology conditions which are presented in the UAE?

Dubai, being the second most common destination of medical tourism in the world, allows it to experience high influx of patients with a variety of urological conditions. In the clinic the most common condition that patients presented was Benign Prostatic Hyperplasia (BPH). This was common as a high number of males over the age of 65 who have BPH. It was also common in the practice as patients from around the Middle East attend, as they seek the best surgical treatment available to control their condition. Other common presentations include incontinence from a variety of reasons as well as Kidney and Ureteral Stones which required lithotripsy.

Study changing health trends focusing on preventative medicine?

It is very hard to control the health trends in a country like Dubai, due to the influx of people from around the world. There have been great efforts to control tropical diseases, such as Tuberculosis, with strong immigration control to those seeking to residency Dubai to prevent outbreaks. Other conditions which the state is focusing on controlling are hepatitis B and HIV/AIDS.

However from my time in Dubai, and in the time I spend in A&E, tourists often present to the Hospital, because of heatstroke and dehydration. Asthma or allergic respiratory conditions

were also common which were triggered and aggravated by sand and dust in the air caused by construction.

Gain experience in communicating with patient from different nations and cultures and learn to understand their perception?

It is reassuring that even though patients came from different linguistic backgrounds, I was able to communicate with them with relative ease. This was due to the fact that many of them came from affluent backgrounds and had western education and therefore can speak good English. Those who were not able to speak either Arabic or English, I found it was easy to communicate with them using non-verbal communication. The difference I noted between Dubai patients and London patients was that in London the patients seemed to be more elderly whilst in Dubai they seem to be of a younger generation.

The fact many of these patients, attend the hospital privately meant that they had higher levels of expectations. This was both in the standard of medical care, and hospital services. From talking to the patients, there seem to be a common opinion that they would be cured of ailment, without any pain, in a private suite with the level of luxuries seen in hotels.

Although patients remained respectful of hospital staff including the doctors, I felt the doctor patient relationship in Dubai differed from the UK. Patients had greater power, demanding certain treatments, where doctors were seen less of a partner in their healthcare and more of a service provider. This change in the dynamic of the relationship meant, some patients requested inappropriate investigations, and some doctors complied, knowing that even after informing the patient, that these investigations are un-necessary and sometimes invasive. These patients would happily go to another hospital where they can pay and receive the treatments and investigations they request.

Learn to understand different cultures, learn social etiquettes and cultural norms?

As I have been to UAE a few times in the past, and as I come from an Arab background I found it easy to adjust to the different social norms. Dubai has a huge expat community and it was great fun going to different areas i.e Deira and enjoying the South Asian culture and food or Karama and being able to try out the East Asian food and entering their unique markets.