

Elective report

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Dates of elective: 14 April – 23 May 2014

Elective address: Hospital Tuanku Jaafar.

Jalan Rasah

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Subject: Obstetric & Gynaecology.

My elective experience in Tuanku Jaafar Hospital, Seremban (Malaysia) was a unique clinical experience unlike what I have previously experience back in the UK. The elective period was between 14 April to 24 May, a total of 6 weeks.

The reason for choosing this location as my elective destination was to explore the different population and different disease. Malaysia is a tropical country located in the Southeast Asia. The demographic and disease more prevalent in this region are different. Besides that, being a Malaysian myself, I'd like to familiarize myself with the medical system and the work etiquette here.

My initial plan was to do 3 weeks of O&G and 3 weeks of medicine. I wanted to get out most of the easy access to hands on teachings in O&G, which I could not get when I was in the UK. I would like to learn the common diseases here such as Dengue Fever, malaria, cardiovascular disease and diabetes and also learn how different the medical approach is here.

I started with 3 weeks of O&G. Arriving at the administration office on the first day, I was quickly briefed of the rules around the hospital, handed in my elective letter and a piece of photo for my ID card. I went to the gynaecology clinic as instructed to look for the doctor who would be supervising me. I was made to wait for 3 hours before the medical officer (MO, equivalent to SHO) to have the quickest induction session ever.

In 10 minutes, Dr Salwani explained to me the different wards and the clinics available. I was told that the Head of O&G department, whom I never got the chance to meet even on the last day, would sign me off at the end. I was free to arrange my own schedule and advised to get out the most by seeing the unique cases that walk into the ward.

I arranged the following 2 weeks so that I could have a taste of every service in the department. I followed on the ward rounds that started at 8 AM in the morning. The house officer (HO, equivalent to FY's) came earlier to ensure patients notes are updated before the specialists come for the round. I got the impression that the specialists were very strict that they put the fear of God on these HO's. Each HO was responsible for a bay of patients, besides the everyday workload, they keep a log of practical skills that they need to be signed for. For

O&G, they have to carry out 30 deliveries, 20 episiotomies, 20 amniotomies et cetera within the 4 months rotation.

I also joined the labour room. Labours are mainly HO-led and sometimes HO will receive assistance by senior nurse. MO's will be available to help out any complicated cases. I am very surprised by this system since we were not taught how to deliver baby in the UK but we were allowed to assist. I was taught how to by the senior nurse and was given the chance to deliver. It was a fantastic experience.

The clinics are always busy. To accommodate with the huge number of patients, a consultation room is used to consult or examine 3 patients at one time. There is obviously no room for privacy. I once observed a patient being broken news of a missed miscarriage side to side to a follow up patient. I was shocked by the lack of private rooms in the clinic especially when the group of patients who walk in are women with sensitive health problems. However, patients did not show any signs of dissatisfaction by this.

The staffs in the hospital were friendly and approachable. Though some higher in the hierarchy could show some dismissive attitude. The HO's were less approachable compared to the MO's as they have more workloads on their shoulder. So most of the time I would tag along with an MO. In clinics, the MO taught me a lot, by asking me questions and inviting me to ask questions. Since the system was quite different such as the usage of brand names rather than generic, I was a little behind during the consultation.

Some days could be tougher. Elective students were not given the most attention to. Since the hospital is a teaching hospital to a private medical school close by, their medical students are given priority to. Some of the hospital staff did not even know that there was such a thing as elective students therefore it was quite difficult situation. I had to explain who I was every time I wanted to do something and had experience a number of missed opportunities and unnecessary telling-offs just because I was not aware of how teachings are being carried out here. However, I enjoyed the experience very much I ended up rearranging my elective to be full 6 weeks of O&G.

Malaysia is a nice country with lots of public holidays. I managed to do some mini trips here and there around the central of the peninsula including Singapore. It is tropical country with warm climate. It was the rainy season, so the morning would be hot but it would be pouring rain later in the day. Seremban is a far more relax city than the country's capital, Kuala Lumpur. It is only 50 minutes drive to Kuala Lumpur and 50 minutes away from the airport.

I stayed with my family in town and drove to hospital every day. The hospital has a big cafeteria with great selection of food and library accessible by everyone and equipped with computers. The hospital itself is located in the city so it's not far from the main motorway or other shops for other lunch options. There is also accommodation for the doctor on site but I wasn't sure if that would be offered to the elective students. I would recommend this hospital for other students

except, if you were in the same position where you'd be let loose in a place that you don't know, have a clear plan and double check with the senior doctors/nurses before you get some unnecessary telling off.

All in all, it was a great elective and also a great holiday for me.