

SSC 5C Reflection(Part 2)

Name – Tahmina Seddique

Elective address- Hospital Kuala Lumpur, Jalan Pahang, 50586 Kuala Lumpur

Subject- Medicine and Paediatrics

I carried out my elective in Kuala Lumpur Hospital in Malaysia. Prior to starting the placement, I was aware that many students had good placements in this hospital and so I was very much looking forward to it.

As I was placed in Medicine and Paediatrics, we had to attend early morning ward rounds, which lasted a few hours. Usually this is not an issue in the UK, but given the humid weather in Malaysia, you found yourself feeling very faint towards the end of the round. The ward rounds were carried out in a similar way to the UK. However, the FY1s presented the clinical cases in Malay, which made it difficult for us to understand. The patient notes on the other hand were written in English and clerkings were exactly the same as the UK. Majority of the time, we were encouraged to read patient notes instead of going on ward rounds as we had already passed final year. It was interesting to see things like x-ray films, instead of looking it up on the computer. On a number of ward rounds, we were questioned on ECGs and blood tests. This made for a good learning experience, but it was not a regular occurrence. The placement was as I expected, but I was still surprised by the number of patients on the ward, which was about 40 in one ward. But there was no shortage of junior doctors, as every FY1 equivalent doctor on the ward had to look after eight patients.

The healthcare professionals were brilliant and made you feel part of the team. Majority of the doctors spoke English and would take the time to explain cases. Some nurses were not fluent in English, which made finding our way a bit challenging on the first day as we were told to seek help from the nurse in charge. Once we were settled, the teams were very pleasant and made us feel part of the team. The best part of the elective was seeing what medicine was like in a developing country and seeing how medicine is practiced with no computerised input. We were able to go to the A+E department and the staff were very helpful in pointing out any interesting patients.

The healthcare system has both a private and a public sector. Community care is provided by private practitioners. There are various hospital charges that patients have to pay on admission and also after discharge. All patients admitted have to pay a deposit, which is refunded upon discharge. The value of this deposit is dependent upon your citizenship status, the type of ward you are admitted to and whether you are a pensioner. As a Malaysian citizen, patients are charged significantly less. Other charges include ward charges and treatment charges. Government employees and pensioners are not charged for treatment. As for outpatient appointments, patients are charged for every visit and any investigations that have been carried out. These charges were almost double for non-citizen patients. The various charges were difficult to get your head around and actually made me appreciate the National Health Service even more than I did before.

The people in Malaysia were very friendly and helpful. Prior to going to Malaysia, I assumed that there would mainly be native Malaysians living in the country. However, I found that people of South Indian and Chinese descent make up a significant portion of the population. Being in Kuala

Lumpur was very exciting, as there was a lot to see and do. The city has a very rich cultural and historical heritage.

I didn't experience anything that I would classify as negative as far as the placement is concerned. It would have been useful if there was some teaching from the consultant or registrar, but we were given teaching when it was possible by the junior doctors.

Our accommodation was situated right across the hospital and was within a 2-minute walking distance from the hospital. This was very convenient and made a nice change from the morning commutes in London. Getting around the city was very easy as you could easily get to your destination of choice via the monorail network and buses. There was abundance of taxis and some taxi drivers charged more than necessary as soon as they realised you were a tourist. As for the local cuisine, you could choose from Chinese, Malaysian and south Indian food. I enjoyed the Chinese dishes that we tried, however I was not keen on the Malaysian cuisine as majority of the dishes are fried.

For future students looking to carry out their elective in Malaysia, I would advise you to ask for teaching on any new topic that you have not encountered before. The advantage of being in this hospital is that you are able to go to almost any department and see patients, and so there are so many opportunities for learning. I would also encourage students to learn a few phrases in Malay, as it helps build a good rapport with both staff and patients.