

## **ELECTIVE (SSC5b) REPORT (1200 words)**

A report that addresses the above four objectives should be written below. Your Elective supervisor will assess this.

### **Introduction:**

During my medical elective, I had the invaluable opportunity to undertake an observership in Vietnam, a country rich in cultural heritage and rapidly evolving healthcare landscape. Specifically, I was stationed at FV Hospital, a renowned private healthcare institution known for its high standards of care. This experience provided me with a unique insight into the healthcare provisions, surgical techniques, disease epidemiology, and patient communication in a setting distinct from the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom.

FV Hospital, situated in Ho Chi Minh City, is recognized for its state-of-the-art facilities and expertise in providing comprehensive medical services. As a private hospital, it is expected to maintain higher standards compared to government hospitals in Vietnam. Through this report, I aim to reflect on my experiences, challenges, and learning opportunities encountered during my elective placement, covering objectives ranging from surgical skill enhancement to understanding healthcare provisions and disease epidemiology.

### **Objective 1: Improvement of Surgical Techniques and Skills**

While my observership at FV Hospital provided limited hands-on experience due to its observational nature, I had the invaluable opportunity to witness a diverse array of surgical procedures. Despite encountering language barriers, which initially posed challenges in comprehending procedures in real-time, I found ways to overcome this obstacle by diligently researching and seeking clarification afterward.

Throughout my placement, I observed various surgical interventions, including ureteroscopies, open reduction and internal fixation (ORIF) of limb fractures, and the removal of Kirschner wires (K-wires). These experiences not only broadened my understanding of different surgical techniques but also exposed me to the complexities and intricacies involved in each procedure.

One particularly enriching aspect was my unexpected exposure to the trauma department, despite my initial placement being in urology. This unplanned opportunity allowed me to gain insights into trauma management, further expanding my surgical repertoire. Despite the challenges posed by language barriers, I seized every opportunity to absorb knowledge from skilled surgical teams and make the most of my observership experience.

Although my direct involvement in surgical procedures was limited, my time at FV Hospital underscored the importance of adaptability, resourcefulness, and proactive learning in overcoming challenges encountered during medical electives. While I may not have been actively suturing or performing surgical maneuvers, the observational nature of my placement provided valuable insights into surgical practices and techniques, laying a foundation for future skill development and proficiency.

### **Objective 2: Understanding the Pattern of Healthcare Provisions**

My experience at FV Hospital provided valuable insights into the pattern of healthcare provisions in Vietnam, particularly within the context of a private healthcare institution. FV Hospital impressed me with its high standards of care, exemplified by its modern facilities, cleanliness, and efficient workflow. One notable aspect was the absence of significant waiting times, a stark contrast to the often lengthy queues and delays encountered in some NHS settings.

The streamlined and organized approach to healthcare delivery at FV Hospital contributed to a sense of efficiency and patient-centered care. Despite being a private hospital, there was a palpable commitment to providing accessible and comprehensive healthcare services to all patients, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

However, notable differences were observed in medication prescribing practices compared to the NHS. One striking observation was the frequent use of broad-spectrum antibiotics for conditions such as urinary tract infections (UTIs),

in contrast to the preference for specific antibiotics like nitrofurantoin and trimethoprim in NHS guidelines. This variance in prescribing patterns highlights the influence of local epidemiological factors and clinical practices on treatment approaches.

Furthermore, FV Hospital adhered to its own version of clinical guidelines, akin to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines in the UK. While these guidelines aimed to standardize clinical practices and enhance patient care, their divergence from established NHS protocols underscored the importance of context-specific approaches in healthcare provision.

Overall, my experience at FV Hospital provided valuable insights into the pattern of healthcare provisions in Vietnam, offering a nuanced perspective on the intersection of private healthcare delivery, clinical practices, and patient outcomes. This exposure not only broadened my understanding of global healthcare systems but also underscored the importance of adaptability and cultural competence in navigating diverse healthcare settings.

### **Objective 3: Exploring the Epidemiological Distribution and Prevalence of Disease Across Vietnam**

While my elective placement primarily focused on surgical observations at FV Hospital, I gained some insights into the epidemiological distribution and prevalence of diseases in Vietnam, albeit indirectly. The nature of my placement limited my exposure to broader public health perspectives; however, certain observations stood out during my time at the hospital.

One notable observation was the prevalence of trauma cases, reflecting the impact of regional factors such as traffic patterns and transportation modes. Vietnam's bustling streets, characterized by the widespread use of mopeds and motorcycles, contribute to a higher incidence of road traffic accidents and traumatic injuries. This observation underscores the importance of understanding regional epidemiological trends and their implications for healthcare delivery and resource allocation.

While my elective placement did not afford extensive opportunities to delve into the broader epidemiological landscape of Vietnam, the prevalence of trauma cases served as a poignant reminder of the multifaceted challenges facing healthcare systems in the region. Moving forward, a deeper exploration of disease prevalence and distribution across different regions of Vietnam would provide valuable insights into public health priorities and inform targeted interventions to improve population health outcomes.

Despite the limited scope of my observations, my experience at FV Hospital highlighted the interconnectedness of surgical care and public health, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive understanding of epidemiological trends to guide effective healthcare delivery and policy development.

### **Objective 4: Developing Confidence in Communicating with Patients Despite Language Barriers**

One of the significant challenges I encountered during my elective placement at FV Hospital was the language barrier, which limited my ability to communicate effectively with patients. As a result, opportunities for direct patient interaction were limited, hindering my ability to develop confidence in patient communication skills.

Despite this obstacle, I recognized the importance of overcoming language barriers to establish rapport and facilitate effective communication with patients. To address this challenge, I proactively sought ways to bridge the communication gap, albeit in a limited capacity. I made an effort to learn some common Vietnamese phrases to greet patients and convey basic information, aiming to demonstrate cultural sensitivity and build rapport despite the linguistic barriers.

While my interactions with patients were minimal due to the language barrier, this experience underscored the critical role of effective communication in patient care and highlighted the need for language proficiency and cultural competence in healthcare settings. Moving forward, I recognize the importance of continuous learning and skill development in communication strategies to better serve diverse patient populations and overcome linguistic challenges.

Although my ability to communicate with patients was hampered by the language barrier, I remain committed to enhancing my communication skills and cultural competence to provide compassionate and patient-centered care in multicultural healthcare settings.