

## ***Elective Report***

Placement on Paediatric Surgery at Royal London Hospital in London, UK

Dates: 23/04/12 to 25/05/12

Supervisor: Mr Harry Ward

Contact: [Harry.Ward@bartsandthelondon.nhs.uk](mailto:Harry.Ward@bartsandthelondon.nhs.uk)

### ***Subject: Paediatric Surgery***

This elective was a great experience; I feel like I have gained knowledge, understanding and had more opportunities for practical skills than what I had originally thought.

My team were very eager to help me learn and gain the most from the experience. My day started at 8am with the registrar handover where I would get up-to-date on the patients and observe them using the SBAR (Situation Background Assessment and Recommendation) system. The different activities of the day would be discussed and I got to choose my timetable for the day. It consisted mainly on theatre days, clinics, Ward rounds, being with the registrar on call and being involved in a variety of meetings.

The theatres were a brilliant experience which reiterated my interest in paediatric surgery. I got to observe and assist in a big variety of surgeries. Being able to observe/assist during surgeries was an amazing learning tool and it really allowed me to see how they performed certain surgeries. It was great that most times one of the surgeons would find time to teaching me before/whilst/ post-surgery. Some of the team even taught me and allowed me to practice different types of stitching. It was an amazing feeling when I completed my first sub-cutaneous suturing.,

The Ward rounds involved seeing a big variety of patients. Even though it didn't involve the same excitement as theatres it was great to follow so closely on patients recovery pathway and learn about the things that can go wrong and the things that are in place to try to prevent complications. I particularly enjoyed having the opportunity to examine the neonates (especially the preterm babies) as it allowed me to become more familiar with the technique of examining small babies and increased my ability to differentiate between normal and abnormal. I also had the opportunity to observe a few neonatal conditions and see their presentation and how these babies are managed. One of these cases was a 25 week preterm baby who I got to examine pre surgery, he looked very ill and his abdomen looked greenish black. I was then told that he had NEC (Necrotising Enterocolitis), the surgeon didn't want to operate as the baby also had IVH (Intra Ventricular Haemorrhage) Grade 4. The neonatologists thought surgery was the best option the neonate had of survival, hence a surgery to cope with the perforated NEC was performed. At first the baby seemed to be slowly recovering but after a few days he unfortunately passed away.

This case brought me closer to some of the ethical issues within paediatrics and some of the very challenging decisions that the clinicians who deal with these babies face regularly. It was

reassuring to see that they tried their best to find out the best solution, held MDT (Multi-disciplinary team) meetings and tried to keep the patient and family as comfortable as possible.

Some of my registrars and the consultants were very keen on teaching which was extremely helpful for my learning and displayed behaviours towards me which I would like to be able to impersonate with my students.

Being with the registrar on call had some very exciting moments. Patients would come from all over east London with a query surgical diagnosis. On these days I got to see intussusceptions coming in, observe them being clerked in and the US confirmation of diagnosis and then assist in theatre. It was wonderful to be a part of that progression of care and then being able to see them on the ward rounds in the following few days and witness their recovery.

I have really enjoyed having the opportunity to be integrated in Paediatric surgical team in a hospital like Royal London with great facilities. I have gained a greater insight into the specialty and what the daily life style is of a surgeon in this specialty involves. I loved gaining a better insight into the different presentations and learning about how the patients get managed. The experience has exceeded my expectations. I was expecting to observe the surgeons and I wasn't sure whether I would be allowed to participate in the different daily tasks as it is a very specialised area dealing with children and neonates. I was very pleasantly surprised by some members of the team who really made an effort to teach me and also to obtain a more hands on experience by examining the patients, questioning me on the managements and allowing me to assist in the surgeries. It has been a great experience!

Carla Pimentel  
5<sup>th</sup> year medical student