

Elective Report

Describe the pattern of neurological illness in North East London and Essex, comparing the local population to other populations in the UK and abroad

During my time at Queens Hospital I was able to meet patients with a broad range of neurological problems. I spent time on the neurosurgical ward, in theatres and in neuro-critical care. Queens Hospital serves the local population which includes people living in the London Borough of Redbridge however their neurosurgical services extend to people from the wider Essex area. In Redbridge, 57% of the population describe themselves as White British. The next largest ethnic group is Asian/Asian British at 25% whilst the Black/Black British population is about 8%. The large ethnic population in this borough means that certain illnesses not ordinarily seen in other parts of the UK can be encountered at Queens Hospital. These illnesses may be due to infections following travel to tropical countries or as a result of immunosuppression due to either HIV infection or alcoholism.

Describe the pattern of health provision available at the Essex Neurosciences Centre, contrasting this with neurosurgical provision in other countries

There are 37 neurosurgical units in the UK each serving a specific area. The Essex Neurosciences Centre, along with the Neurosurgical Centre at the Royal London Hospital, serves East London and Essex. The Essex Neurosciences Centre is based at Queens Hospital, a state of the art teaching-hospital built in 2006. It consists of a theatre suite, a dedicated ward and a specific neurosciences critical care unit. The neurosurgical team works very closely with other specialties including neurology, neuroradiology, neurophysiology, neuropathology and neuropsychology. Elective patients (i.e. those diagnosed in outpatients with brain or spinal conditions) are usually referred by their general practitioners. Emergency patients are admitted via accident and emergency at Queens Hospital or other district general hospitals in Essex.

In the United States, the health system is funded by the private sector through employers, the government or private schemes. 15.3% of people do not have health insurance, this equates to 45.7 million people who may not be able to access basic medical care. The majority of patients require a GP referral to see a Neurosurgeon, however those on a higher level of insurance are able to make direct outpatient appointments with a Neurosurgeon of their choice. The United States is home to a number of brilliant institutions, including John Hopkins and Harvard, whose contribution to neurosurgical development is without question. The issue lies in conferring the benefits of these developments to all sectors of society.

Increase my knowledge and gain exposure to a wide range of neurological disorders and neurosurgical interventions

I spent my time at clinics, on the wards and in theatre. This enabled me to see patients at each stage of treatment, from the initial assessment and diagnosis, to the actual surgery in theatre and post-operatively on the ward. Spending time in Neuro ITU gave me the opportunity to see critically ill patients and also gave me an insight into their management. I made personal notes on everything I saw which allowed me to later reflect on what I had seen and glean any learning points for that day.

Kyle Sampath-Ring (Final Year Medical Student)

I turned this into a sort of diary/blog which I plan to keep and take into my time as a foundation doctor. I aim to reflect on any interesting neuro cases that I come across which I hope will allow me to continue to develop my clinical neuroscience knowledge base and skillset.

Research career options within Neurosurgery and gain a realistic perspective of different careers within this field

I looked into the training programme for neurosurgery and spoke with some of the neurosurgical trainees and consultants. I now have a better idea of what is needed from myself if I would like to pursue this career in the future. In comparison to the week in neurosurgery that I had in year four, I felt that spending my elective at Queens gave me a better idea of the daily/weekly/monthly duties involved in the job. Spending time with different surgeons also gave me a better insight into the different subspecialties within neurosurgery.