

Elective Report

April/May 2013

Describe the pattern of disease/illness of interest in the population with which you will be working and discuss this in the context of global health

Established in 1828, The Royal Free Hospital is situated in the affluent area of Hampstead, London and the demographic differs greatly from Tower Hamlets. However, as with most of London, the cultural diversity was clear within the patient demographic. The hospital is a tertiary care centre with over 800 beds and is affiliated with the University College London Medical School. The hospital is the regional centre for kidney and liver diseases and a major transplantation centre; and around 700,000 patients a year are seen from all over the world.

I was able to attend both clinics and theatres, where I saw a variety of patients with differing pathology. Many of the patients I had seen were suffering with pathology related to the prostate, however as my consultant was also a renal transplant surgeon, it added variety to the patient list. I was able to assist in theatre with renal transplants, nephrectomies and other general urological surgical lists; which I found interesting and enjoyable.

From a global health perspective, London is similar to other countries which have a well-established healthcare system, such as the United States of America, France, Japan and Cuba. However, countries which have less well established healthcare systems and/or a less socioeconomically affluent demographic, the cases tend to be more advanced.

Describe patterns of health provision in relation to the country in which you will be working and contrast this with other countries, or with the UK.

As my elective was conducted in the United Kingdom, the healthcare system was provided by the National Health Service, although I was able to see a few privately funded patients too. The NHS was founded in 1945 and is currently government funded providing free healthcare to all. Currently, the NHS is undergoing a controversial reshape of its structure, and is now moving towards a more community based system, where more and more complex cases which are dealt with in hospitals will be dealt with in the community. As a result many hospitals have undergone cuts and there is uncertainty over the future of many departments and hospitals; with the closure of many across the country.

Muhammad Abdur-Rahman 070250800

14/06/13

Organ transplants are organised for by NHS Blood and Transplant; a national programme. There is a national shortage of organs in the country which is primarily due to a lack of donor and of course a large need for organs.

Some European countries use an 'opt-out' system, where citizens in the country are required to opt out if they do not want donate organs. This differs to the UK, where people are required to 'opt-in.' There is considerable debate around this issue; and the NHS blood and transplant have presented both sides of the argument on their website. The issue is not as straightforward as it seems, with multiple complex ethical considerations. However, very recently, the welsh government has passed legislation to change the system to an 'opt-out' which will come into effect over the next couple of years.

Health Related Objectives and Reflections

While on elective, I was able to spend time with the consultant, specialist registrars, nurses in various different settings; including ward rounds, clinics and theatre. Initially going into urology, I wasn't quite sure of what to expect; as I hadn't had the opportunity to be placed with a urology team during medical school; hence I was interested in doing a placement in this area of medicine.

At every possible opportunity, I tried to get involved with the team as much as possible, in order to understand all aspects of urology. I regularly attended theatres, clinics; scrubbing in when possible which allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of urology.

At medical schools today, we are regularly criticised by senior doctors and surgeons for not knowing enough anatomy, and I felt that during my time at medical school, my exposure to surgery and my knowledge in surgery was not as sufficient as I would like. Hence, by attending as being as proactive as possible has enabled me to increase my knowledge not only in urology, but surgery as a whole.

I spent the majority of my elective shadowing my consultant, however I was also able to spend time with less senior members of the medical team and also with nurses and the urodynamic team. During my time, I had noticed that there were gaps in my knowledge, especially pharmacology which I will brush up before I start my foundation job in August.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time with the urology team and am considering it as a career. The experience has given me focus and an added determination to work towards my membership to join the royal college of surgeons.