

Student Elective Report

Location: Whipps Cross Hospital, Whipps Cross Road, E11 1NR, London

Tel: 02034165000

Dates: 22/04/2013 - 24/05/2013

Supervisor: Dr Flood

Subject: Acute medicine

Introduction and Objectives

I spent my five-week elective at Whipps Cross Hospital, London. It is an NHS hospital, which serves a large population of the East End of London. I spent my entire time in acute medicine and endocrinology as I felt these were specialties that I needed to gain more experience in. Additionally I wanted to familiarise myself further with common pathologies that I would face here in the United Kingdom as an F1. My objectives were:

- 1) To be aware of the common disease presentations in East London such as TB and other disorders.
- 2) To understand health provision and working within the NHS and Barts health in preparation for F1 post.
- 3) To clerk receiving patients; to examine, to learn to formulate diagnosis and management; to be familiar with common scenarios in acute medicine.
- 4) To prepare myself for F1 post and reflect on areas of improvement and formulate action plans for those areas.

Report

As I had been exposed to acute medicine during my time as a medical student I knew what to expect from this placement. However, spending five weeks after completing my medical exams and having all the knowledge fresh, the placement allowed me to gain further insight into acute medicine within an NHS hospital.

A usual day in a general medical ward would begin with a ward round in the morning led by a consultant, and/or a registrar, a senior house officer, a junior house officer and the nurse making up some members of the multidisciplinary team. The team would go round the all the patients in the ward and assess their stay and condition. As an F1 my duty will be to prepare the list of patients within my team, know their presenting illness and background, be able to present each patient to the most senior doctor leading the ward round, write a summary of the days round in each patients notes and make a list of all the jobs which needed to be done during the day. The jobs included things like taking bloods, cannulating ordering x-rays or

other radiological scans, preparing discharge summaries, checking daily blood results, writing up drug charts and prescribing.

I had lots of experience doing all these duties and practised writing in the notes during the ward rounds and presenting patients, and am now more confident in these areas. I made sure that my notes were checked by the doctors on the ward sound and countersigned by them. I also spent time in accident and emergency and on the wards clerking and examining patients – two vital skills to diagnosing patients. I would then try to think up with a few differentials and present to my seniors. As I progressed through my elective I was able to broaden my thinking when writing down a history and think of all the systems that could be affected as a result of the presenting complaint.

In terms of practical procedures I had never felt confident in cannulating patients. During this elective there were many times when I remained unsuccessful but the most important thing I learnt was to watch others cannulate and take tips on specific things that they may do; by the end of the placement my practice had paid off and I was much better and more confident in this procedure.

I was able to see a variety of conditions within general medicine, but what was interesting was the high prevalence of TB in this area of East London. TB, a notifiable disease spread by droplets can sometime present very non-specifically. If the patient was from the Indian or African continent and presented with vague symptoms the doctors would always screen for TB. This was valuable to my learning as it made think more openly when clerking or assessing patients.

I am originally from East London so my accommodation was already arranged at my parent's house where I reside. I took public transport to the hospital, which was not expensive. For those interested in this elective the doctors and other staff at the hospital are very friendly and there is opportunity for lots of hands on experience. I also enjoyed meeting the various other students who were also on their elective at Whipps Cross hospital.

Summary

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my time at Whipps Cross hospital and am looking forward to starting my job as a Foundation year 1 junior doctor. I feel that the skills I have learnt have better prepared me for FY1. I learnt the main jobs and duties required of an F1, and additionally developed personally. I appreciate the need and importance of teamwork within the healthcare and the need to be resilient to the long hours and stressful nature of a doctor's job. I have also learned to reflect upon my days work and what went wrong, and what I did well – through this I hope to build competence and skill in my practice. I would recommend any student to take up this elective if they would like to ease their transition from medical student to foundation doctor.