

Elective Report

Personal Information:

Student Name: Ailsa McIlwaine

Dates of Elective Placement: From 9th March 2015 To 17th April 2015

Host contact information

Name of Supervisor: Dr Ruth Shakspeare

Supervisor contact details: shakespeare ruth@gmail.com

Official Name of Hospital: Mulanje Mission Hospital

Address of Hospital: P.O Box 45, Mulanje, Malawi

Medical Speciality: Paediatrics, community, maternity, male

Title of elective report: The Warm heart of Africa

Specify the personal learning outcomes for your elective as set out on your elective risk form. Relate each learning outcome to relevant Outcomes for Graduates as specified in the GMC document Tomorrow's Doctors (2009).

- To gain an increased awareness of global health issues that impact Malawi

11. (j) Discuss from a global perspective the determinants of health and disease and variations in healthcare delivery and medical practice.

- To gain an increased understanding of tropical medicine

Perform full history and examination 13(c); come to a differential diagnosis 14 (b); make clinical decisions based upon level of information available and level of training 14(f);

- To become more proficient at communication with patients from a different culture

Communicate effectively in various roles 15(h); Learn to adapt to changing circumstances 21 (a)

- To gain experience in decision making and patient management plans

14. (b) Make an initial assessment of a patient's problems and a differential diagnosis. Understand the processes by which doctors make and test a differential diagnosis.

14. (f) Make clinical judgements and decisions, based on the available evidence, in conjunction with colleagues and as appropriate for the graduate's level of training and experience. This may include situations of uncertainty.

- To gain more experience in child health

Perform full history and examination 13(c); Assess and recognise the severity of clinical presentation 16 (a)

Keywords (to assist future students with their elective searches):

Malawi, mulanje, mission

Refective Elective report - your elective report should be between 750-1000 words long and should include the following points:

- Details about the organisation of your elective
- Practical organisational tips, resources, advice, lessons learn't, information about the country you have visited to help future students
- Comments specifically aimed at the academic staff with regards to the organisational process and any issues that may have arised during your elective

I decided to spend my elective in Malawi which is lovingly known as the Warm Heart of Africa despite being one of the poorest countries in the world. Mulanje Mission Hospital (MMH) is located in south-east Malawi close to border to Mozambique, approximately 40 miles from Blantyre. MMH works together with a local government hospital to serve a population of 550 000 people. It currently has 220 beds providing a full range of medical, surgical and paediatric services and the staff team is made up of international and local healthcare professionals.

I gained a wide range of clinical experience during my elective by rotating round different specialities. I spent 2 ½ weeks in paediatrics/neonatal where I undertook ward rounds with the medical officer, assisted in procedures and clerked new admissions. I further developed my clinical skills by examining children and newborns and I also learnt how to manage premature infants and patients who presented with malaria, pneumonia, malnutrition and tropical diseases.

I spent a week with the Primary Health Care team in the community, visiting rural villages where we ran clinics dealing with: administering vaccinations, family planning, HIV counselling and under 5 growth and development. During this week I also attended a prison clinic to review the sick patients in a very different setting.

During my 1 ½ weeks in maternity, I undertook post-natal ward rounds with the clinical officer, attended antenatal and gynaecology clinics, assisted with vaginal and caesarean deliveries. I spent a further week on the male ward assisting in procedures and clerking new admissions, as well as a daily ward round.

Organising my elective

The Christian Medical Fellowship have a list of contacts of mission hospitals in Africa which we used as a basis for sending out emails to enquire if they take elective students. MMH seemed the most organised and provided us with detailed information about the hospital, elective program and accommodation. I also managed to get full funding from various charities and trusts in the UK to cover the cost of my elective by using a website called Guidestar to search for funds.

Practicalities and tips

The hospital can organise transport to pick you up from the airport at Blantyre and accommodation in a guest house is also available which has a kitchen to cook in as well as a housekeeper who also looks after you. Cooking is very seasonal with only 5 types of vegetables available when we were there so expect to eat mainly vegetarian style food! On Fridays staff go out for dinner to a golf club which does good burgers and lasagne or the pizzeria which is famous throughout Malawi!

Money wise only bring a VISA card as no other types of card work and even with that you will find it doesn't work in most of the banks. We found that EazyBank was the most reliable one to get money from. Also bring lots of dollars with you if you want to visit the various sites listed below as £40 worth of Kwacha is about an inch thick and difficult to carry around!

Things to do...

- Liwonde safari camp
- Majete safari camp
- Climb mount mulanje
- Visit Zomba and climb Zomba plateau
- Cape Maclear – A must do!!!

I would highly recommend Malawi as an elective destination as it is such a contrast to the UK in terms of resources available and it truly is the Warm Heart of Africa.