

Student Elective Report

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Country visited	Vietnam
City or town	Hue
Hospital/unit/clinic	Hue University Hospital
Dates visited	10/04/2017 – 05/05/2017
Supervising doctor	Dr Le Hong Phuc
Contact details of your host:	phucbstmhue@gmail.com

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	<p>Hue University Hospital is one of two major hospitals in Hue, and serves the central area of Vietnam. It is a large teaching hospital that is attached to the local medical school, hosting a significant number of medical students.</p> <p>The day typically started at 7am with a virtual ward round, where registrars and one consultant would discuss the previous day cases, each presented by a medical student. These would be a mix of plastics and orthopaedics cases, most commonly fractures requiring open reduction as well as trauma following road traffic accidents (the most significant cause of patient presentation). Interestingly, there was also a large number of osteomyelitis cases requiring surgical debridement.</p> <p>Thereafter, the majority of the day would be spent in theatre. Doctors were very keen to encourage myself and other students to scrub up and assist with the operations, including removing k-wires/ screws, reducing fractures, excising lesions, as well as taking responsibility for wound closure.</p> <p>Each week there was also one physical ward round where I had to opportunity to present a particular case. Evenings/ weekend often involved informal discussion of plastic surgery over dinner with the rest of the team.</p>
What were the best things about the	During my elective I was able to witness a wide diversity of plastic surgery cases that are less typically encountered in the UK

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visit? (120 words max)	<p>(predominantly trauma following road traffic accidents). Moreover, I was able to gather an appreciation for how these cases are managed in a resource limited setting, both in terms of equipment and medical staff.</p> <p>The medical staff were incredibly accommodating of students, and frequently offered opportunity to get involved in many aspect of patient care. In particular, I was able to take on more responsibility in the operating theatre, and gain a fundamental understanding of the principles of skin flap operations especially in the trauma setting.</p>
What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)	<p>Arranging a visa to undertake an elective in Vietnam was slightly challenging and time consuming. This required a visit to the embassy in London, as well as paying quite a significant expense to get a working internship visa. It is worth arranging this a few months in advance.</p> <p>The language barrier also posed some issues – especially during ward rounds and when trying to look through patient notes. Fortunately, the other doctors had very good English and were incredibly accommodating to help me understand each case.</p>
What accommodation was provided?	<p>None provided – I stayed in a hotel about 20 minute walk from the hospital. This was great for my stay – cheap (much like the rest of Vietnam) and breakfast included. Just bear in mind – a 20 minute walk in the heat of Vietnam can become quite uncomfortable. You may also not get chance for breakfast if you want to make the 7am ward round!</p>
Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)	<p>Absolutely – Vietnam is an incredible country that offers a fascinating insight into how plastic surgery cases are managed in a resource limited setting. The staff are incredibly welcoming and inclusive, offering a wealth of opportunity to learn about cases and get involved in practical skills.</p> <p>Moreover, the doctors regularly invite elective students to share dinner with them in restaurants all over the city, as well as with their family. This is an incredible opportunity to learn about their culture and sample some of the local cuisine.</p> <p>Outside the medical setting, Vietnam offers some of the best food in the world and the most beautiful scenery. I thoroughly recommend people spend some time travelling through Vietnam to experience the inland forests, coastal beaches, bustling markets and wealth of other incredible attractions. Not to mention, it is one of the most reasonably priced countries to travel in.</p>
Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?	<p>Spending 4 weeks in Vietnam has given me a fantastic theoretical and practical insight into plastic surgery. It has reaffirmed my desire to pursue a career within this field, and I hope to return to Vietnam in the future to catch up with the local doctors who I made strong contacts with.</p>