



BAPRAS

British Association of Plastic
Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons

Student Elective Report

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Please return to: secretariat@bapras.org.uk

Please complete this report form as honestly as possible so that others considering an elective may benefit from your experience. If you visited more than one place, please complete separate forms for each. Please bear in mind that we will be posting this report on our website for others to read.

Student Elective Report

Name	Chris Chong
Medical School	Imperial College London
Email (optional)	██████████

Country visited	Colombia
City or town	Bogota
Hospital/unit/clinic	Clinica Universitaria Colombia
Dates visited	5/6/23 – 23/6/23
Supervising doctor	Dra Marcela Sanchez
Contact details of your host:	██████████

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	<p>I was in the operating theatres across different hospitals, assisting in different procedures, ranging from reconstructive surgery to aesthetic surgery, including simple removal of gastrostomy tube scars, taking out breast implants, liposuction, blepharoplasties, correcting gynaecomastia, breast reconstruction using DIEP or LAT flaps, which involved microsurgery.</p> <p>I was given hands-on experience suturing under the guidance of the surgeons and to sit in on various different consultations – from pre and post-operative for breast reconstruction for breast cancer, blepharoplasties, ptosis, botox, etc.</p> <p>I also visited patients post-op to check on the viability of the flaps.</p>
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	<p>The variety of different procedures that a qualified plastic surgeon could perform was astounding. Comparing between the NHS and an insurance-based healthcare system also highlighted the pros and cons of universal healthcare coverage.</p> <p>The healthcare team and everyone in the country were extremely warm and welcoming. I was well integrated into the team and was given plenty of opportunities to practice vital surgical techniques and room to ask questions without judgement.</p>
What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)	<p>The only disadvantage was the language barrier. I was not able to ask more complex questions, and this impacted the patient-physician interaction slightly.</p>

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	<p>Colombian Spanish was also not the easiest to understand, when compared to Mexican Spanish, with a lot of slang.</p> <p>However, as I continued to learn Spanish throughout the course of the elective, I could visibly notice stark improvements in my understanding and communication. Also, this really allowed me to appreciate the importance of good communication, be it verbal or non-verbal.</p>
What accommodation was provided?	Accommodation was not provided.
Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)	Yes, even if you are not a native Spanish speaker or know very little Spanish, I would definitely recommend everyone to step out of their comfort zones and experience this.
Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?	Yes.