



BAPRAS

British Association of Plastic
Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons

Student Elective Report

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	Jessica Westwood
Medical School	University of Birmingham
Email (optional)	

Country visited	Nepal
City or town	Kathmandu
Hospital/unit/clinic	Nepal Cleft and Burn Center, Kirtipur Hospital
Dates visited	May 2023
Supervising doctor	Dr Kiran Nakarmi
Contact details of your host:	

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	<p>Every day started at 8am in the library, where the plastics department have a daily meeting. This is an opportunity for one member of the team (or a visitor) to teach on a particular topic. Then I would either go to the burns ward round or the outpatients department to see some patients on the theatre list for the day.</p> <p>There are two theatres designated solely for inpatient burns, and an additional one or two theatres assigned for the other plastics/maxfax cases. These usually started with a cleft palate/lip case and then there would be hand surgery, burns contractures and/or various other surgeries. For example, I had the opportunity to assist with one amniotic band syndrome case.</p> <p>In the burns theatres the operations were largely debridement and skin grafting. However, I also saw a scalp avulsion case where the surgeons did a latissimus dorsi free flap.</p> <p>I also undertook some burns research while I was at Kirtipur, which is ongoing, so I am grateful to be collaborating on this project and hope to continue working with the department going forward.</p>
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	<p>Being on a placement in the same department for an extended period of time gave me the chance to get to know the team well and in turn I was able to get more and more practical experience as the elective went on. I had the opportunity to scrub in regularly and practiced suturing on a number of occasions. Particularly with the debridement and grafting surgeries, the surgeons were keen to let me get involved and taught me a number of surgical techniques. I was also very grateful to be able to assist with some microscope-assisted nerve and vessel repairs.</p>

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What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)	As the vast majority of the patients do not speak English, I relied on doctors or students translating ward rounds or consultations for me. This is obviously challenging, especially when it is busy, so it did somewhat limit the clinical experience to theatres. However, the doctors were very happy to teach in English in theatre and in the daily teaching sessions.
What accommodation was provided?	No accommodation was provided. I stayed in Kathmandu and commuted to Kirtipur each day – taxis are very cheap and take about 25 minutes, or the buses are very regular and take about 45 minutes. Alternatively, other medical students stayed in homestays in Kirtipur.
Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)	Yes, definitely! I thoroughly enjoyed this four week placement and have learnt so much from the experience. I would recommend doing at least a month with the department as it took a few weeks to start to get the most out of the placement. For a plastics elective I couldn't recommend Kirtipur Hospital enough, but if you are hoping to do a combined specialty elective it might not be the best choice as the hospital's main focus is burns and plastics.
Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?	Yes. This elective offered me exposure to a wide range of plastics' presentations and surgeries, which has only made me more interested in the speciality.
Which University are you studying at?	University of Birmingham