



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	Luisa Álamo-Gómez
Medical School	(UCL) University College London
Email (optional)	

Country visited	South Korea
City or town	Seoul
Hospital/unit/clinic	Seoul National University Hospital (Seoul National University Hospital, Seoul National University Bundang Hospital, Boramae Medical Centre) Department of Plastics and Reconstruction
Dates visited	01/05/2023 – 09/06/2023
Supervising doctor	Prof. Sang Hwa Kim (SNUH), Prof. Baek Kyu Kim /Prof. Yu Jin Myung (SNUBH), Prof. Ji Ung Park (Boramae)
Contact details of your host:	

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	<p>SNU medical school has 3 associated hospitals, each with a plastics & reconstructive department performing slightly different surgeries. In order to experience all that plastics has to offer I was placed at each hospital for 2 weeks (my elective was 6 weeks in total). I went into hospital every day and observed a wide range of surgeries, with subspecialties ranging from paediatrics, craniofacial & cleft, microsurgery, breast, hand, skin, trauma and cancer.</p> <p>Although my placement was mostly observational, I was able to learn a great deal and all the professors and residents were happy to answer any of my questions. There were also some opportunities to scrub into very interesting surgeries and occasionally help suture at the end of a case. One of the highlights of my time at SNUH was being able to scrub into my first LVA microsurgical case as a first assistant to the professor. We were allowed to attend their interdepartmental meetings and their weekly journal club presentations where residents presented all the latest research.</p> <p>I got to meet other medical students also on their elective and we planned evening/weekend activities around Seoul. It's such a vibrant city with loads to do/see!</p>
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	<p>I was able to observe and learn from an impressively large range of surgeries and interesting cases!</p> <p>Moreover, being one of the top tertiary centres in South Korea, SNUH receives a lot of international plastic surgeons and fellows. I was lucky enough to meet several of them, which gave me the opportunity to start</p>

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	<p>forming those professional relationships that will be essential in my pursuit of a career in plastics.</p> <p>I am thankful for everyone's hospitality and greatly enjoyed the regular team and departmental dinners!</p>
<p>What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)</p>	<p>Given the nature of their medical training in SK, there normally is a high number of residents and fellows (supernumerary) in theatres. Being a medical student you are inevitably at the bottom of the hierarchy when it comes to scrubbing into surgeries, but I was still able to learn extensively as plastics is such a visual specialty. My advice is to befriend one of the residents most comfortable with English so they can then give you a rundown of the surgery afterwards.</p> <p>I found that setting up research opportunities was slightly challenging for the same reason but if interested, maybe emailing your supervisors in advance would help set it up!</p>
<p>What accommodation was provided?</p>	<p>Currently no student accommodation is offered and instead they suggest you find your own place on Airbnb. I recommend staying in Gangnam if you end up being placed at all three hospitals like I was. Otherwise, you can stay somewhere in Jogno-gu near the main SNUH hospital. Public transport in the city works flawlessly and will get you anywhere you need to be on time.</p> <p>This might change as they used to offer visiting students a room in their student residence (Global Centre) near the main hospital.</p>
<p>Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)</p>	<p>I would definitely recommend choosing Seoul, South Korea to do your plastic surgery elective. I loved the city and the people I met during my placement! If you are considering following this career path, doing your elective in plastics will allow you to start creating those international professional relationships that might help you in the future.</p>
<p>Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?</p>	<p>During medical school you get little to no exposure in the specialty and this is the perfect opportunity to get introduced to all its complexities. I feel more motivated than ever to pursue my career in plastics and the BAPRAS bursary really helped me make it more affordable.</p>