



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	Michaela Rogers
Medical School	University of Bristol
Email (optional)	

Country visited	South Africa
City or town	Cape Town
Hospital/unit/clinic	Groote Schuur Hospital, Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital
Dates visited	05/09/2022 – 30/10/2022
Supervising doctor	Dr Kevin Adams
Contact details of your host:	

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	<p>My elective involved attending weekly Registrar teaching, weekly surgical meetings, attending clinics, ward rounds and assisting Plastics, Reconstructive & Maxillo-Facial theatre lists involving a range of procedures including breast reduction, contracture release for paediatric burns, skin cancer excisions, cleft palate and cleft lip repair, split thickness skin grafts, scar revisions, syndactyly release, skin tag excision, ORIF mandible/condyle fractures, keloid excision, wound debridement, complex polydactyly removal, excision of hydra-adenitis of axilla, first stage reconstruction of ear, trigger thumb release, debulking of neurofibroma of cheek and alveolar bone graft for cleft palate defect.</p> <p>I spent time in the major trauma unit and was exposed to patients with multiple traumatic injuries such as gunshot, stab wounds and also burns victims. I spoke to patients about what it was like growing up in Cape Town. Often, they used to ask me how the shift was going as it looked busy and I was very surprised that despite their injuries and pain, they still took the time to check in with how I was. The patients were extremely grateful for any care they received in my experience. I found my elective very rewarding and varied.</p>
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	<p>I developed a good working relationship with the team and the surgeons were keen to share their skills with me. I was taught through the consenting process in South Africa and encouraged to start practicing consenting under supervision. As time went on, I was trusted to do more in theatre, from initially retracting and doing a few stitches, to performing simple procedures under supervision by the end. I felt more comfortable in theatre. I noticed I took less time to scrub and felt that suturing felt more comfortable. I received good feedback on the improvement of my surgical skills in my last week there and was pleased that others could see the improvement in my clinical skill.</p>

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What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)	Gunshot, stab wounds and vehicle accidents were commonplace. I found the never-ending stream of patients with violent injuries quite shocking. Whilst knowing this would be the case, I'm not sure I had prepared myself for the emotional toll it would start to take as I spent more time here. I had already seen some members of staff that appeared to be completely de-sensitised from it all, but I recognise that for me as someone brought up in Europe where life is much safer, my initial reaction to these situations is very different. The other medical students decided to take breaks together to offload. I felt part of a team and we supported one another.
What accommodation was provided?	No. I booked an Airbnb nearby.
Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)	Yes
Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?	Yes. Since returning from my elective, I am inspired to pursue a career in Plastic Surgery. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to work in another country and would like to get involved in charitable surgical work abroad once I am qualified. I aim to get involved in projects with the Plastic Surgery department in Bristol this year and to plan a taster week in the UK to see the contrasts between Plastic Surgery in different healthcare systems.
Which University are you studying at?	University of Bristol