

Student Elective Report

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| Name | Christian Flynn |
| Medical School | The University of Sheffield |
| Email (optional) | |

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| Country visited | Borneo |
| City or town | Kuching |
| Hospital/unit/clinic | Sarawak General Hospital |
| Dates visited | 04/06/2018 – 24/07/2018 |
| Supervising doctor | Dr Wong Jin Shyan / Mr Ranjit |
| Contact details of your host: | |

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| Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max) | <p>I spent time on the wards completing rounds with the team and in theatre. I experienced first-hand how the surgical team dealt with various common and rare complex pathologies. There was a wide variety of presentations, from congenital paediatric abnormalities to extensive trauma reconstruction cases. There were many procedures for advanced skin flaps, which were more common due to the high prevalence of road traffic accidents.</p> <p>During the ward rounds, I experienced how hard the team worked to deal with the huge patient workload due to the centre being a tertiary referral centre. There was a much higher prevalence of trauma due to road traffic accidents as well as burns and as such, I witnessed the intense and often difficult management of advanced flaps on the ward rounds. Due to the complexity of the cases, theatre lists were typically very long and it was useful to compare this to the UK where only essential surgery is undertaken out of hours.</p> <p>Furthermore, the opportunity to work and experience a healthcare system in a third world environment was unique and gave me an insight into the difficulties encountered with resource allocation and understaffing.</p> |
| What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max) | <p>The best thing about the visit was to witness and experience the variety of cases the team are expected to deal with on a daily basis. In the UK, there is specialisation within plastic surgery, however in SGH, the surgeons had to deal with plastic cases as well as maxillofacial, ENT and orthopaedic procedures amongst others.</p> |

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| | <p>It was incredible to witness the difference made to patients post-operatively, especially after major trauma that would have otherwise left them with significant morbidities throughout the rest of their lives.</p> |
| What problems did you encounter? (120 words max) | <p>There were minimal problems even with the language barrier as most of the Doctors spoke English and were very thorough in their explanations and always had time to go over learning points.</p> |
| What accommodation was provided? | <p>There was local hotel/hostel accommodation available as well as an 'elective house'.</p> |
| Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary) | <p>Yes, I would recommend this placement to anyone interested in this specialty and Borneo in general for a rich cultural experience.</p> |
| Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience? | <p>Yes. The placement has vastly improved my awareness of the importance of plastic surgery and the significant difference it can make in patients' lives.</p> |