

Student Elective Report

Name	Farhaan Khan
Medical School	University of Cambridge
Email (optional)	

Country visited	Cambodia
City or town	Phnom Penh
Hospital/unit/clinic	The Children's Surgical Centre
Dates visited	18/06/18 - 27/07/18
Supervising doctor	Dr. Gollogly
Contact details of your host:	

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	The Children's Surgical Centre is a non-government funded hospital in Phnom Penh providing rehabilitation surgery to poor disabled Cambodians free of charge. It specialises in T&O, plastics, ENT and ophthalmic surgery. Most of my time was spent scrubbing-in and assisting in theatre in an array of surgeries most notably tendon repairs, burns contracture release, nerve injuries and SCC/BCC excision. A specialist maxillofacial/plastics surgical team from France was visiting at the time so I was fortunate enough to witness and assist in complex facial reconstructions, an experience I can never forget. Aside from theatres, I followed patients through from pre-op to post-op, took an active role in clinic consultations and witnessed the innovative ways the centre would achieve desired outcomes in a limited resource setting. A key focus at CSC is the training of local surgeons which I was able to contribute to by delivering some topical oral presentations and generating posters for reference. A challenging aspect of the visit from a social, clinical and surgical perspective was seeing the chronic injuries that many patients presented with due to not having the means to have their injury attended to in their native healthcare system.
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	Several things come to my mind. Seeing pathologies rare to the UK and then having the fortune to assist in their surgical management as an active member of the team day-to-day was really exciting especially as there was no standard patient. We addressed whoever and whatever pathology came through the door. The period where a French maxillofacial/plastics team was visiting CSC was amazing because I was able to see weird and wonderful facial reconstructions take place and see the dynamic between a specialist international team and the local surgeons who were learning at their side. But above all, it was the people we encountered and worked with that made the elective as incredible as it was.

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<p>What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)</p>	<p>Perhaps the greatest problem was the language barrier between me and the patients which hindered communication. This meant that I couldn't perform clinic consultations independently but had to rely on the local surgeons/staff to act as an intermediary and translate on my behalf. Apart from slowing down the consultation, this wasn't as tedious as I first thought because most surgeons were able to speak and understand English well and would use the opportunity when translating to provide me ad hoc teaching on the patient's pathology. Outside of clinic consultations, I didn't have any issues with communication perhaps because most of my time was spent in theatres where patients were under general anaesthesia.</p>
<p>What accommodation was provided?</p>	<p>I stayed in a privately rented hotel roughly 10 mins by tuktuk from CSC. However, accommodation nearer to CSC can be arranged through the hospital with a rent in the region of 350USD per month. There are also many hostels/guesthouses nearby that elective students choose to stay in.</p>
<p>Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)</p>	<p>Yes, I would most definitely recommend this elective for anyone who knows they want to pursue a career in or are keen on the idea of surgery. The elective is very hands on, with lots of opportunities to get involved in theatre and undertake research/audits at the hospital.</p>
<p>Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?</p>	<p>Before the elective I was quite sure that surgery was the line of work I'd like to pursue. Plastic surgery was one of my favourite specialisms and I applied to CSC knowing that the hospital has a large plastics caseload. I used the elective to re-evaluate my ambitions and I can now say that the experience has firmly inspired and enthused me to go forth and chase a career in the field of plastic surgery.</p>