

Student Elective Report

Name	Harry Carter
Medical School	Plymouth Peninsula Medical School
Email (optional)	

Country visited	New Zealand / India
City or town	Wellington / Padhar, Madyah Pradesh
Hospital/unit/clinic	Hutt Hospital / Padhar Hospital
Dates visited	13/08/18 - 07/08/18 10/09/18 – 05/10/18
Supervising doctor	Dr Fiona Smithers Dr Deepa Choudry
Contact details of your host:	(Dr Smithers' secretary) (Elective coordinator)

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	<p>I started my elective in the regional plastics, maxillofacial and burns unit of the Hutt Hospital just outside of Wellington, NZ. Here, I became part of a team of 20 doctors working in the plastics department and taking part in a wide range of procedures and clinics. I saw and helped to treat a range of skin cancers, developing my confidence in the recognition of benign and malignant lesions. I would often assist in larger cases too, including traumatic reconstructions, severe burns and head and neck surgery.</p> <p>Following New Zealand, I travelled to a small village in the central state of India called Padhar. This village is home to a ~200 bed Christian mission hospital that provides medical, surgical, obstetric and emergency services. My first day at the hospital was quite a culture shock; patients were seen next to each other in outpatients, hygiene standards were lower and most surgical equipment was reusable. Surprisingly, the busiest surgeon was the maxillofacial surgeon, followed by the plastic surgeon, dealing with large volumes of head and neck cancer patients due to tobacco chewing. Poverty in the population meant that healthcare was a luxury and patients would often present extremely late.</p>
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	<p>The best thing about my placement in Wellington was being involved in big cases that I had limited exposure to in the UK. Each day was completely different because the team was so big. I now have a much better appreciation for the variety of plastic surgery procedures that are possible.</p> <p>My best memories from Padhar were being much more involved in surgery, often working as a first assistant and closing wounds. The</p>

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	doctors in the hospital were fantastic teachers and very hospitable, often inviting us for dinners and larger events.
What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)	<p>I did not have any significant problems in New Zealand but was aware when I was driving around that the roads are not as safe as home, with many people doing dangerous passes on single track roads.</p> <p>In India, infectious diseases such as TB, hepatitis, malaria and scrub typhus were a constant risk to be wary of. The roads were a real hazard (much worse than New Zealand) and you have to be aware of people trying to rip you off in the cities.</p>
What accommodation was provided?	<p>Hospital accommodation was offered at Hutt Hospital but I elected to stay in Wellington before being fortunate enough to be offered to housesit a few miles from the hospital.</p> <p>Padhar hospital has a guesthouse just opposite the hospital where a few elective students and I stayed during our visit. Three meals were provided each day which was very convenient.</p>
Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)	<p>I would recommend Plastics in Hutt Hospital as they receive major cases from all around the North Island and are one of the few centres where plastic surgeons dominate head and neck surgery. The team there are very friendly and keen to teach.</p> <p>If you want lots of hands-on surgical experience, Padhar is a great place to visit. Head and neck cancers are rife, meaning assisting in lots of neck dissections, excisions and reconstructions using flaps. The only downside is that when you aren't in theatre, in clinic or on the wards, there isn't much to do.</p>
Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?	Yes – I really enjoyed both the standard day-case procedures and the complex reconstructions which I could see myself doing as a career. However, I really enjoyed the head and neck aspects too so we will see.