

Student Elective Report

Name	Jessica Richards
Medical School	University of Bristol
Email (optional)	

Country visited	Nepal
City or Town	Tika Bhairab, Lele
Hospital/unit/clinic	Anandaban hospital
Dates visited	30/3/18 – 29/5/2018
Supervising doctor	Dr Indra Napit
Contact details of your host:	

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	<p>My time at Anandaban Leprosy Mission hospital was varied for the duration of my stay, with ample opportunity to get involved in all aspects of hospital life. This included days in theatre, on the leprosy or general wards, in specialist/general clinics, and working with other healthcare professionals, including physios, orthotics and counsellors.</p> <p>Some days I observed complex reconstruction surgery for complications of leprosy disease, others I would scrub in and aid with the amputation of limbs or help debride burns and other wounds in adults and young children. I was fortunate to see the management of chronic, non-healing ulcers using skin-grafting, or with Leukocyte and Plasma-Rich Fibrin (L-PRF) therapy.</p> <p>Monthly satellite clinics were provided in the Southern region of Nepal, to identify and treat patients with leprosy, who would otherwise have poor access to specialist care. During these clinics, those with leprosy reactions or showing potential benefit from reconstructive surgery for their nerve palsy or limb destruction, would be transported and treated at Anandaban, free of charge.</p>
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<p>What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)</p>	<p>The variety of work was great, and the management of chronic-ulcers was exciting, as patients finally saw ulcers that had been present for years, heal.</p> <p>Being a mission hospital meant staff genuinely cared about patient wellbeing and weren't just trying to make money. They naturally invested in patient's lives, not just their treatment. This wholistic approach was particularly beneficial in tackling the leprosy-associated stigma. It was also rewarding to know that patients were being enabled access to healthcare, not otherwise be possible, without the funding of the hospital.</p> <p>The best thing however, was seeing lives literally transformed. From being segregated from family and community, burdened with the anxiety of having a potentially debilitating and deforming disease, to being empowered to live normal lives.</p>
<p>What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)</p>	<p>The language barrier was at times difficult, as I spoke limited Nepali and didn't have an official translator with me. However, most staff spoke very good English and would translate for me if needed. This was perfect when on the wards and time wasn't too pressured, but busy clinics were often difficult to follow because of this.</p> <p>Problems with confidentiality also arose, as it was difficult to get a patient alone for their consultation. Patients would frequently walk into the consultation rooms and wait for their turn, whilst standing over the current patient. Although doctors tried their best to prevent this from happening, it wasn't always feasible with the limited space and number of patients waiting.</p>
<p>What accommodation was provided?</p>	<p>A twin-room with a basin at their training centre, as their guest house was currently under reconstruction due to the recent earthquakes.</p>
<p>Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)</p>	<p>Yes – the hospital was a great environment to work at, particularly because of their Christian ethos which I completely agreed with. It also provided ample opportunity to learn about leprosy and its newest treatment options, as well as some of the complex reconstructive surgeries.</p>
<p>Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?</p>	<p>Although there was no dedicated plastic surgeon at the hospital, the surgery that took place at the hospital opened my eyes to the specialty a bit more. I was able to appreciate how it changes lives, and can help remove the stigma that is often associated with conditions such as leprosy and burns patients.</p>

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