

Student Elective Report

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| Name | Sasha Eve Wilson |
| Medical School | University of Liverpool |
| Email (optional) | |

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| Country visited | Malaysian Borneo |
| City or town | Kuching |
| Hospital/unit/clinic | Sarawak General Hospital (SGH) |
| Dates visited | From 26/06/2017 |
| Supervising doctor | Mr John Ranjit |
| Contact details of your host: | drjohnranjit@gmail.com |

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| Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max) | <p>I began each day with a 7.30am ward round on the Burns Unit. During these rounds we reviewed newly admitted and post-op burns patients, as well as patients in the post-op period for other reconstructive surgery and combined cases. Following ward round I attended the daily theatre lists and took the opportunity to scrub-in to all cases, including an 8-hour resection of a large dermatofibrosarcoma protuberance, requiring coverage with a skin grafting, using the lower back as the donor site. Another memorable case was a 3-step surgery for a malignant melanoma of the foot with PET-positive iliac lymph nodes. This firstly involved lymph node dissection, followed by extensive dissection of the plantar aspect of the foot to resect the melanoma. An upper limb flap was then raised, along with nerve supply, which was finally grafted onto the exposed plantar aspect of the foot. Due to the skin type of the population, melanomas are rare in Borneo so when they do appear they often go unnoticed or ignored by the patient, meaning many are advanced at the point of presentation. This is in contrast to the UK where melanomas are more common and well-recognised by patients, partly due to the public health promotion of the 6C's of suspicious skin lesions.</p> |
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| <p>What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)</p> | <p>The extensive time spent scrubbed-in to theatres allowed me to get a well-rounded knowledge of the typical cases that are treated by plastics. Furthermore, shadowing the Head of Department meant that I was permitted to accompany a team from the plastics department at SGH to go to Sarawak Heart Centre to assist in a combined case with cardiothoracics to remove a large chest wall sarcoma. This practical experience surmounted any surgical experience I have had in the UK thus far in my training.</p> |
| <p>What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)</p> | <p>All of the doctors that I encountered spoke perfect English however many of the patients cannot so most consultations in clinics were carried out in Malay. Due to the high patient turnover in this state general hospital, there was little time for explanation of cases despite there being interesting pathology presenting to the clinic.</p> |
| <p>What accommodation was provided?</p> | <p>Dr Wong (gangrenes@yahoo.com), who organises electives at Sarawak General Hospital, can provide information about renting a room in a house for elective students which is inexpensive and less than 5-minute walk to hospital.</p> |
| <p>Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)</p> | <p>I would certainly recommend an elective with Plastics in SGH. As my only experience of healthcare had been within the NHS, it was interesting to see the workings of a government health service in a country with an extremely high case load and considerably fewer resources than in the UK.</p> |
| <p>Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?</p> | <p>My elective experience has only consolidated by enthusiasm for Plastics, and given me further motivation to start planning my final year in medical school around preparing a portfolio for Core Surgical Training following F2.</p> |