

Name	Simardeep Singh Sadhra
Medical School	University of Birmingham
Email (optional)	

Country visited	Nepal
City or town	Kathmandu
Hospital/unit/clinic	Kirtipur Hospital
Dates visited	01/05/17 – 26/05/17
Supervising doctor	Dr Shankar Rai
Contact details of your host:	shankarrai1956@gmail.com

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	<p>Kirtipur Hospital is one of the largest burns and plastics centres in Nepal, with over 100 beds, 6 operating theatres and over 12 plastics and maxillofacial surgeons. Mornings usually consisted of an MDT, reviewing current patients and discussing theatre lists, followed by either a general plastics ward round or burns ward round. I was in theatres almost every day and had the pleasure of assisting in cleft palate correction, skin graft procedures and burn contracture release surgeries. The surgeons were extremely enthusiastic mentors, with an abundance of positive energy. Over the course of my time at Kirtipur, I learned how to suture fine, delicate skin graft tissue as well as gain a grasp on how to use basic surgical equipment e.g. diathermy, scalpel, forceps, clamps etc.</p> <p>The hospital itself is partially run by donations and partially by the government. Despite resources being fairly limited, the surgeons do an excellent job with incredible surgical outcomes. Some caseloads had extremely severe initial wounds and often patients were given little analgesia due to the limited availability. Examples of distressing cases I saw were patients who had diabetic foot ulcers, which had eroded down to the bone, a patient who had accidentally caught her hand in a grass cutter which severed all her fingers, hand and wrist, and a burn contracture which had not been treated for months leaving the patient's fingers fused together in a tight fist.</p>
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	<p>Seeing the impact these surgeries had on an individual's livelihood in a country where the mean monthly income is below \$100, was one of the most rewarding experiences I encountered. One case which will stay with me for a long time, was of a baby girl's cleft palate correction. This was funded by an outreach programme. It was extremely moving</p>

	<p>watching the baby reunite with her mother post-surgery – this was just one of many cases at Kirtipur.</p> <p>Furthermore, the ‘hands-on’ teaching approach from surgeons allowed me to get immersed in the specialty and really become a member of the team, giving me ample opportunity to practice and learn new surgical skills – extremely beneficial for my own professional development.</p>
<p>What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)</p>	<p>Most of the staff spoken fairly good English – however, patients generally spoke little English. Despite this, nurses were usually happy to interpret whenever I needed to speak to a patient on the ward.</p> <p>Secondly, on a personal level, it took a few days to adjust to dealing with the emotional implications of certain graphic traumatic injuries I witnessed - especially as I have had little exposure to this during my undergraduate training in the UK. However, getting to know the patient and their surgical treatment plan ignited my passion for the specialty as it gave patients hope for their future.</p>
<p>What accommodation was provided?</p>	<p>Accommodation was available at a small cost close to a nearby Buddhist monastery; however as I was travelling with two other colleagues from my medical school, we decided to rent a house via ‘AirBnB’ in Kalimati, Kathmandu. There is a 20-minute public microbus which travels from Kalimati to Kirtipur (sometimes you have to request to be dropped off outside the hospital). Kalimati is also a 10-minute taxi ride away from Nepal’s travellers’ ghetto, Thamel. The house we stayed in was fairly modern – however, electricity and Wi-Fi would regularly cut off if there was poor weather conditions.</p>
<p>Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)</p>	<p>Yes, definitely. This hospital is full of fantastic surgeons who are willing and enthusiastic to teach students. It provides a unique insight into the triumphs and challenges facing plastic surgery in low and middle income countries.</p> <p>Furthermore, Kathmandu is an ideal location to use as a base when travelling around Nepal. This country offers some of the world’s most impressive landscapes, enriched with a vibrant yet mystical and spiritual culture.</p>
<p>Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?</p>	<p>This experience has unquestionably made me more likely to pursue a career in plastic surgery. The huge variety of cases and surgeries covered by plastics, as well as it’s creative approach to novel individual cases make the specialty very appealing. Furthermore, seeing the incredible life-changing outcomes plastic surgery can have on an individual’s livelihood spurred me on to getting involved in a research project at Kirtipur – focussing on how best to tackle infection control via training members of staff in conjunction with external organisations such as Interburns.</p>