

Student Elective Report

Name	Anoopama Ramjeeawon
Medical School	Cardiff University School of Medicine
Email (optional)	

Country visited	Tanzania
City or town	Dar es Salaam
Hospital/unit/clinic	Muhimbili National Hospital, Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Department
Dates visited	19/02/2018-16/03/2018
Supervising doctor	Dr Edwin Mrema
Contact details of your host:	

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max) 189	<p>During this placement I spent four weeks with the Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery department at Muhimbili National Hospital, the national referral hospital for Tanzania. The department consisted of 1 adult ward and 1 paediatric ward, 2 operating theatres and 4 consultants. During the placement I found I got to know the team quite well and they were very encouraging and keen to get me involved in a variety of activities.</p> <p>On Mondays and Tuesdays I attended paediatric theatres, on Wednesdays there were the consultant-led ward rounds, on Thursdays I went to adult theatres and on Fridays I went to clinics. These department activities usually started around 9.30am, finishing around 2-3pm, however there were grand rounds, case presentations and a variety of teaching, starting at 7.30am.</p> <p>The majority of cases were scald and open fire burns, trauma injuries and keloid scars, however there were also several cases of congenital problems such as syndactyly.</p> <p>In the evenings, twice each week, I attended Swahili lessons organised by Work the World, tailored specifically for healthcare students/staff.</p>
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	<p>As the national referral hospital for Tanzania, unusual and complex cases were referred to Muhimbili; I enjoyed seeing and learning about the variety of cases, particularly conditions not often seen in the UK, for example, Xeroderma Pigmentosa.</p> <p>The opportunity to regularly to scrub in and assist with almost all surgeries whilst attending theatres was also a highlight, enabling further experience and development of surgical skills.</p> <p>All doctors spoke English, which facilitated understanding the cases seen and benefitting from teaching that took place.</p>

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	<p>Tanzania is a beautiful country to explore – based in Dar es Salaam it was easy to get to several local islands with beautiful beaches, to visit Zanzibar (which has amazing snorkelling/diving sites) and go on Safari.</p>
<p>What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)</p>	<p>While organising this placement through Work the World meant Swahili lessons were included, it was still difficult to communicate with patients to the extent normally required when interacting with patients.</p> <p>In terms of organisational aspects of this placement/visit there were no problems as it was organised through Work the World who are very experienced with organising placements here, so tell you everything you need to know and do before arriving, for example, visas.</p> <p>The difficulties faced in managing some patients due to limited resources of the hospital and limited financial resources of the patients was difficult to get used to, as was learning about the socioeconomic effects on their families, especially coming from the UK, where these problems would not have been as important an issue.</p> <p>The adult theatre had no air conditioning, and as the temperature was around 36 degrees, being scrubbed in theatre was a bit uncomfortable.</p>
<p>What accommodation was provided?</p>	<p>Work the World have a house (near the beach and with a pool) in Oyster Bay, with 24-hour security, for students doing placements organised through them in Dar es Salaam. This house is in a safe neighbourhood, which was about an hour from the hospital by bus (20p one way) or about 20 minutes by uber/tuk-tuk (around 60p if shared one way).</p> <p>I made lots of new friends in the house and it provided a nice social environment for evenings and weekends, there was usually an activity planned each evening, including barbeque night, escape rooms, karaoke on a local beach or visiting local bars/restaurants.</p> <p>There was an on-site team who managed the accommodation including cleaning and catering breakfast and dinner. They also helped with booking trips, for example, to Zanzibar or Safari.</p>
<p>Would you recommend this to someone else? (explain if necessary)</p>	<p>I would recommend this placement to other students - the fact that the doctors spoke English was very useful; medicine is studied in English rather than Swahili in Tanzania, therefore all discussions about patients between doctors takes place in English. Dr Mrema and his department were all very welcoming and enthusiastic to teach and explain cases seen, which helped make this placement really enjoyable.</p> <p>I spent four weeks with this department, and although you have the option to rotate through different departments in the hospital, I recommend spending a similar length of time in the department – I got to know the team well and they gradually let me assist with more during surgery, I learnt about surgical techniques used and developed confidence with surgical skills while assisting with a variety of procedures.</p> <p>The idea of spending part of my elective in Tanzania was initially quite intimidating, however organising it all through Work the World made it easy and I felt safe while I was there. It was also nice spending the evening and weekends with lots of other healthcare students – I made lots of new friends, had a great time and was able to explore Dar es</p>

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	<p>Salaam and surrounding areas.</p> <p>Tanzania has an interesting history and culture which I was able to learn about, from exploring the local area and also from several doctors, the team at our house and our neighbours – overall, I found people there to be very friendly, inquisitive and inclusive.</p>
Are you more likely to choose a career in plastic surgery as a result of this experience?	<p>I organised my elective in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery because I was already interested in pursuing a career in this field. I had a fantastic experience of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in Tanzania, it was so refreshing to see this specialty in another country, and see the types of cases seen there. I also enjoyed the many opportunities to scrub in and assist in theatre, allowing me to learn, practice, and develop confidence in my surgical skills; overall this placement has reaffirmed my interest in pursuing a career in this field.</p>