ZACHARY GRAVATT MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, ELECTIVE REPORT

Revati Chopara

APRIL 2016
Thank You

Dear Gravatt Family,

Thank you so much for your support with my elective at the University of Oxford. The scholarship you so kindly awarded me really helped make my elective an unforgettable opportunity. I learned a lot about obstetrics and gynaecology while at the John Radcliffe Hospital, and was privileged enough to partake in some really beautiful births during my time there. My elective also gave me the chance to grow as a person – this was the first time I’d been so far away from home on my own, and I learned a lot as a result of it. I will always look upon my elective as one of the best experiences of my medical education, and I am so, so grateful for your support in this regard. I’ve attached some photos at the end of this report of my elective. Once again, thank you so much for your kindness and generosity – I am so grateful to you.

Wish you all the very best,

Kind regards,

Revati

Financial Input

The Zachary Gravatt Memorial Scholarship provided a generous $6,000 granted for assistance in funding University of Oxford elective costs and placement.

Activity and Outcomes

1. Clinical and Communication Skills Domain

Emphasis was placed upon communication with the patient, particularly regarding how to explain intimate examinations to patients and how to explain results of these examinations, with practice sessions and feedback. I found this really useful as it helped me to identify more subtle areas of my communication that could be improved, for example, using more general layperson’s language like ‘womb’ instead of ‘uterus’.

During clinics I was often given the chance to independently take histories/examine patients, present my findings to registrars/consultants, and then observe the consultation between my supervisor and the patient to help identify strengths and weaknesses of my own communication skills.
One particularly helpful thing I learned was to start a consultation by asking a patient to describe him/herself, rather than asking them specifically about their pathology at the outset.

2. **Personal and Professional Skills Domain**

- Professional Qualities
- Engagement in Team
- Health and Well-being

**Professional Qualities**

An important part of professionalism is the ability to practice reflectively. This was an integral part of my elective in Oxford. We were each asked to write a short reflective essay based upon a personal experience during the course. In addition, I found debriefing after clinical encounters with supervising clinicians to be a great method of reflective practice.

I explored the ethics and legal aspects of obstetrics and gynaecology through dedicated teaching and discussions throughout the course, and through practical encounters with patients.

Empathy and compassion are, to me, the most important qualities a clinician possesses, and this is the essence of a real professional.

**Engagement in team**

During my obstetrics and gynaecology clinical placement I was allocated to a team. However, I was allocated to other clinics and speciality areas where I spent most of my time, particularly as I found the sub-specialised clinics very different to those I attended in New Zealand, and therefore the best opportunity for learning. Therefore, the team structure was not really emphasised during my attachment. This was similar to my obstetrics and gynaecology placement in Middlemore Hospital in fifth year.

There were still numerous opportunities to engage within the hospital setting. I found that in general clinicians and other healthcare workers in Oxford were extremely approachable and happy for students to participate.

**Health and Well-being**

During my elective I became unwell physically with a respiratory tract infection, saw a GP, was given antibiotics and instructed to take time off until I recovered. I’m so used to pushing through illnesses so as to minimise the impact upon my clinical placements and learning.
But in this instance I could see that I had no choice, and I also had to consider the ramifications of my illness upon patients I encountered. I definitely did not want to spread the infection to others.

3. **Applied Science for Medicine Domain**

The first two weeks of lectures during my elective significantly contributed towards learning in the Applied Science for Medicine domain. The University of Oxford has a strong emphasis on research, particularly the link between key scientific concepts underpinning medicine and how these relate to current clinical practice. This was clearly demonstrated through a wide range of lectures I attended.

All of the concepts covered in lectures were further consolidated with clinical experiences. Often, each lecture topic was directly related to a specific scheduled clinical experience. This helped me explore and deepen my understanding of the applied science of medicine. The applied science for medicine domain was directly tested by a written examination at the end of my course. This was a useful incentive to continue to revise the varying topics I was exposed to during my elective.

4. **Hauora Maori Domain**

As my elective was set in the United Kingdom, there were no relevant indigenous inequalities in health status that were relevant to my placement. However, I did see evidence of ethnic and cultural inequalities during my placement.

Cultural minorities often experience significant health disparities, similar to discrepancies that are seen with indigenous populations in developed countries, for example individuals of Māori heritage in New Zealand. This can be due to a wide range of reasons. It can be difficult for cultural minorities to access health services that are available, due to language issues and/or poor health literacy. This also applies to different cultural perceptions regarding legal and ethical aspects of obstetrics and gynaecology.

5. **Population Health Domain**

In general, I found that the incidence, morbidity and mortality of obstetric and gynaecologic pathologies in the United Kingdom similar to that in New Zealand. However, I found that my clinical experience in the two environments was markedly different. I completed my fifth year obstetrics and gynaecology placement at Middlemore Hospital in New Zealand, which serves an area with marked health inequalities and many individuals who are of a low socio-economic position.

In contrast, I was placed at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, and it was evident that most of the patients were of a higher socio-economic background than those I was used to seeing back home.
This was reflected in their differing clinical presentations with marked discrepancies in access of healthcare services, health literacy and environmental impacts.

**Impact**

I completed my elective in obstetrics and gynaecology at the John Radcliffe Hospital, while attached to the University of Oxford. It was a highly rewarding elective, and provided me with a great opportunity for both professional and personal growth. My placement was conducted in conjunction with Oxford medical students.

During the first two weeks I attended a wide range of lectures; over the next five weeks I was exposed to a wide range of clinical experiences, and in the final week I had the opportunity for revision prior to sitting a written examination.

During the clinical weeks I attended a set of core experiences (antenatal clinics, gynaecology clinics, theatre, gynaecologic oncology, sexual health, delivery suite) as well as a number of tutorials. In addition to these core experiences I was given the opportunity to schedule other clinic/theatre sessions based upon my interests. I chose to explore areas such as endometriosis, medical obstetrics, chronic pelvic pain, urogynaecology and lower risk midwife-led deliveries.

The elective was extremely well organised between the elective department and the obstetrics and gynaecology department, and the teaching was exceptional.

Oxford has a fantastic elective programme with students from around the world, and we worked together to try and ensure that we learned as much as possible while exploring this incredible part of the world.

It truly was a privilege to complete my elective at the University of Oxford.

**Thank you**
I had the opportunity to meet elective students from around the world and we explored Oxford together – I’m sitting third from the left in this photo. Revati

The Oxford students I studied with were fantastic and took me on tours of their respective colleges. I personally found Worcester College particularly beautiful.

Revati
I spent a large amount of my time at the hospital learning and was so grateful for the opportunity.

Revati
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