Gurleen Bansal

University of Leeds, United Kingdom

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Departments: Haematology Oncology and Plastics & Reconstructive Surgery

I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to carry out my clinical clerkship at Nagoya University Hospital. I spent two weeks in Haematology Oncology and two weeks in Plastics & Reconstructive Surgery. One of my main goals for the clinical clerkship was to learn more about the similarities and differences between healthcare in Japan and in the UK, as well as explore specialities that I had not had much experience with before. I feel like I was able to achieve both goals during my time in Nagoya.

During my Haematology and Oncology rotation, I developed m understanding of several haematological conditions, such as leukaemia, lymphoma, and ITP. I was grateful to the doctors for teaching me so much about the conditions, breaking each down into the pathophysiology, clinical presentations, and management. Two valuable experiences on this placement were the ability to practice bone marrow aspiration on a model and see various haematological conditions on histological slides. This really helped me connect the clinical presentations to what was happening on a cellular level and gave me a better understanding of histology, which I was not previously confident in.

My two weeks in Plastics & Reconstructive Surgery allowed me to see a variety of difference procedures from breast reconstruction to cleft lip repairs and several types of flaps. I also had the opportunity to scrub into a breast reconstruction, which was particularly interesting and gave me a better insight into what is involved in these operations. Before the elective, I did not have much exposure to Plastic Surgery, so it was useful to see the variety of work involved within the speciality and what the role of the team entailed. It was pleasant to see the teamwork that took place in the operating theatre as well and amazing to see the level of dedication of the doctors. Many were there to see and learn from the surgeries, which goes to show how much they care about their craft and their future patients.

Throughout both placements, I felt vey welcome and included by the teams. Everyone was friendly and accommodating and the doctors made a real effort to teach me and involve me in the clinical environment. They genuinely took time out of their day to explain things and answer my questions when made a significant impact on my experience.

Outside of the clinical environment, I also really enjoyed being able to experience Japan and its culture. Nagoya was a good place to be based as it had a good mix of busy city and quieter parks and areas. It was also a convenient location for travelling around

Japan and having a few three-day weekends allows me to explore other parts of the country. This was a valuable part of the elective and gave me the ability to improve my confidence in solo travelling as well as be able to explore a new and amazing culture.

I would like to give special thanks to all the doctors who took me on as part of the clinical clerkship and a big thank you to the International Office who were supportive and helpful throughout the whole process. I felt that I could approach them if I had any problems and knowing they were there made the experience easier and more reassuring.

Overall, my clinical clerkship was an excellent experience and one that I would definitely recommend to future students.