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Report for the Overseas Elective Program

It is possible for medical students who are in the final grade of Kobe University to choose hospitals in foreign countries to carry out their clinical practice. The final year in medical school is very important as we have to visit a hospital that we want to be attached to, participate in an overseas elective program in summer, pass the graduation exam and the National Medical Practitioners Qualifying Examination. Because of these milestones, how we spend our last year as a medical student is of great importance. I thought it would be a great experience to participate in an overseas elective program as we seldom have the opportunity to observe the clinical procedures done by medical staff in foreign countries' hospitals and clinics. Some of the reasons why I chose to participate in an overseas elective program with Singapore is because I heard that the medical field there is as sophisticated as Japan's, so I wanted to see it for myself. Another reason is that English is the lingua franca in Singapore, making it easier for me to communicate in English with the people

there. The last reason is that I have never visited Singapore, thus I wanted to see how Singapore is like.

My elective program consists of 4 weeks' duration (from 4/4/16-29/4/16). I was attached to the anesthesia department for the first two weeks, and pediatric surgery for the remaining 2 weeks. Some of us went to Singapore General Hospital but others including me, did our elective program in National University Hospital (NUH), which is a huge hospital that had more than 1,000 beds and three groups of operation theaters. As one of the leading universities in Asia area, Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine has many exchange students from all over the world. While I was in NUH, I met many medical exchange students from Australia, United Kingdom, China, Taiwan and Japan as well. They were all in the final grade.

For the first two weeks, I was on anesthesia and observed many surgeries, ranging from excision of thigh mass to coronary artery bypass graft. I also observed pain clinic and followed rounds in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit. I had opportunities to do carry out some medical procedures like an IV route/intubation under my supervisor.



In the remaining two weeks of my overseas elective program, I moved to pediatric surgery and observed many surgeries for children. The highlight of my experience in pediatric surgery was a liver transplant that lasted more than 14 hours. I followed the surgeons' team to observe the liver transplant and stayed awake through the entire night. I was hit with fatigue by the end of the surgery, but I was so surprised to see some of the surgeons going on their routine morning rounds immediately after the operation. Through this liver transplant surgery, I realized that the ability of the surgical team has a

huge influence on a patient's prognosis. In some surgeries, I wore scrubs. They were great experiences for me.

Although most of the medical staff are from Singapore and Malaysia, we saw that the staff from Indonesia, India and China not only conversed in English with other medical staff and patients, but they also conversed in various dialects such as Mandarin, Hokkien, Cantonese as well as Tamil and Malay. This shows the linguistic diversity of Singapore culture where almost everyone can speak more than two languages and dialects. Even when the medical staff have difficulties communicating with their patients, other medical staff are helpful and help to translate. As a Japanese who is used to a singular culture and language, I am impressed by the plurality of languages in a hospital setting, and the diverse linguistic scene in Singapore.

Our off-duty hours were also amazing thanks to friendly doctors, medical students in National University of Singapore, exchange students from other countries and pleasant dormitory staff. I found that Singapore consists of many different ethnicities, languages, cultures and a myriad of different

cuisines. I suppose that is due to Singapore's colonial history and its central geographic location, making it a popular place for people from all over the world to work and live in Singapore. The saying "Different from others is natural" is fresh for me and this is the most impressive cultural insight I got from my short stay in Singapore.

After this fulfilling experience, I am more equipped and inspired to do my best to be a good doctor. I sincerely appreciate all the support I received from the medical staff and students in Singapore and Japan.