

Exchange report – Mahidol University Ramathibodi Hospital –
From April 4th to 29th, 2016

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1. Introduction

I went to the Ramathibodi hospital Mahidol University for one month, from April 4th to 29th. Mahidol University has several hospitals and each hospital has its medical school. Although Mahidol University is one of the national hospitals, it has national area supported by government and private area. In private area, they have clean operation rooms with latest technology for doing high advanced medical treatments and wards are so large that patient can stay with his family. During my exchange, I spent almost all time in national area.

2. OB/GYN

I stayed my first two weeks in the department of OB/GYN. Unfortunately there were no students at that time, and many residents take care of me. Almost everyday I went to the OPD in the morning and labor room in the afternoon.

In OPD, I had a lot of new experiences. In Thailand, 6th grade student can do anything they want. When I was in the GYN OPD, I had chances to try physical examination and echo. I wondered if it bothers patients that exchange student do such examination. But surprisingly, patients don't mind it. I heard that medical students in Thai often take examinations in OPD, so this may be one of the reasons patients are kind to exchange students. I really appreciate their warm hearts.

I had a chance to see OPD specialized in thalassemia patients. Though thalassemia is rare disease in Japan, there are many patients in Thai. In this OPD, the female patients who have thalassemia examine the typing of thalassemia and their partners also examine the presence of this disease. Doctors always explain about the influence for their fetus. There is no detailed explanation about thalassemia in Japanese medical textbook, so I was surprised Thai students know about not only the way of diagnosis but also interpretation of its typing. I learned that the frequency of disease is different in different country and when we see the foreign patient we should ask their birthplace.

In the afternoon, I went to labor room almost every day. I heard that even the exchange student can help delivery if she wants, but I didn't have the chance because I couldn't see the total delivery. The members in labor room were cheerful and friendly, and I really enjoyed the time with them.

3. Internal medicine

Last two weeks I was in the department of internal medicine with my friend in Kobe University. We joined one of the teams in the ward. Internal medicine is the hardest department for doctors, and they could take little time for us. In this department there were three Thai medical students, so we could talk and know about daily life of medical student in Thai during waiting doctors.

Sometimes we had chances to participate in OPD. For example, this hospital has OPD for HIV patients. In Thai there are more HIV patients than in Japan. The number of HIV patient is increasing because infection prevention is not popular and especially in rural area they don't see doctors regularly. During my 4 hours in OPD, I saw various HIV complications (infection of virus, bacteria and fungi or leukemia etc.). The most impressive thing is that there are many HIV patients who have tuberculosis without lung lesion. In Japan, lung tuberculosis is the most famous and I didn't have much knowledge about tuberculosis in other organs, so I felt this is a blind spot for Japanese students.

When I went to geriatric medicine OPD, I met a nice doctor. He took physical examination very carefully. Elder patients often have long medical histories and many problems. So he always talked a lot and looked at, listened to, touched and moved patient's whole body, from face to toes. I learned that we have to listen to patient's talking carefully and take whole body physical examination even if his or her general appearance looks good.

4. Daily life in Thai

We exchange students stayed at the dormitory located in the grounds of the hospital. I heard the senior medical students and junior residents also use this dormitory and 4 people use the same room. I was surprised to hear that because we don't have dormitories for medical students in our university hospital. Although dormitory staffs couldn't speak English, medical students helped us anytime we wanted to talk with staffs. We often took meals in the canteen near the dormitory. The price was so cheap (about 30 baht for one meal) and there were always a lot of different kind of foods, so we really enjoyed eating there every day.

At the second week in April, Thai people have Thai New Year festival called "Songkran". This is one of the traditional events – Thai people pour water to seniors' hands or Buddha statue to make them pure. During Songkran week, we heard Songkran songs and saw various events not only in the town but also in the hospital. In the department of OB/GYN, all doctors gathered to celebrate Songkran. I joined them and poured water to senior doctors' hands. At the entrance of the hospital, we met music band performance. During Songkran, all the people wear colorful floral-printed shirts – of course, I wore that!! We also walked around the wards and saw that patients pouring water to Buddha statue. In the city center, many young people carried water guns and not only Thai people but also foreigners enjoyed pouring water to each other. We also joined that event and got soaked. What a crazy event it is! Now I think they were really great experiences for me to take part in both traditional and modern Songkran.

During my staying, we could make many good memories with Thai students. We went to dinner or Karaoke after school, visited floating market, and went to Ayutthaya for sightseeing on the weekend. Thai people are so kind and warm, and their smiles are always bright. I love such Thai-people's mind.

There are still a lot of memories I haven't written here. In the end, I'll show you some pictures with my good memories and nice smiles I met in Thai. Thank you.



Doctors in labor room



Doctors in internal medicine



Canteen



Lunch!!



Music band for Songkran in the hospital



Songkran in the city center

Songkran in ICU



Floating market



Dinner with Thai students



Ayutthaya



The last day