

Neurology, Hadassah (Ein Kerem) / Hebrew University Medical School

I have had an interest in neurology for many years, and having completed my rotation at Queens Square in London, I was inspired to spend further time in the field. I have always enjoyed travelling and volunteering in Israel, and it now seemed like a perfect opportunity to spend time studying and working in Israel.

I spent 6 weeks in the neurology department of Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital. It did not take me long to appreciate the truly outstanding level of personal care and treatment at Hadassah. It was heart-warming to see that at Hadassah, patients of all backgrounds are treated equally and indeed, the staff work together in harmony.

My supervising consultant was a humble man who is a leading expert in the field of multiple sclerosis. He introduced me to the department and to the various members of the medical team. My day would usually start at around 7.45 am, where I would help the residents in their daily tasks. We would then join with the consultant for the ward round, which often lasted until midday or, on Thursdays, when we had a Grand Round, well into the afternoon. The Grand Round is based on a traditional European-style round, with the whole medical team and consultants seeing all the patients. Despite it being a challenge to get to the front of the crowd of 20 or so members of staff on the round, it was nonetheless the highlight of the week. I also spent time in the various outpatient departments, and down in the busy emergency room, seeing the acute cases.

Medical students in Israel are active participants in the medical team, and I was encouraged to participate in ward round discussions, journal club meetings and indeed was asked to voice my opinions on the diagnosis and management of patients. This collaborative approach with medical students allowed me to extensively increase my knowledge in the various fields of neurology. The department had a varied case load, and I was able to learn about a plethora of diseases I had never seen before in the UK. These included neuro-infectious diseases such as Lyme Disease and West Nile Virus and the neuroimmunological diseases such as ADEM, and optic neuritis. Whilst in the department, I was also able to complete a research study looking into the views and opinions of neurological patients of their treatment, exploring the psycho-social aspects of medical care.

Whilst in the department I was made to feel very welcome by the hospitable members of the neurology team. Despite having a limited Hebrew when I first joined, this proved not to be a major problem as I had first envisaged. The staff were very happy to talk in English, when necessary; and indeed many patients speak some English. Furthermore, it proved to be a fantastic opportunity to improve my Hebrew. However, I found that as the weeks went on, I improved my Hebrew dramatically, and indeed was even able to learn a little Arabic, which is widely spoken by many of the patients at Hadassah.

Whilst in Israel, I was also able to attend the Israeli Neurological Society Conference. This meeting, held annually, brings together physicians and researchers from Israel. It was an opportunity to hear about the multitude of pharmacological, technological and scientific breakthroughs in the various subspecialties of neurology.

Throughout my time in Israel I was also able to experience the full benefits of Israeli society and culture. I attended a number of social events, visited some historical museums and travelled to some intriguing archaeological sites. Other highlights of my trip included travelling to Tverya and Tzfat.

I would highly recommend any student to carry out their elective in Israel, and in particular, the experience that can be gained from studying at Hadassah Ein Kerem. I am happy to assist any other student who has any queries, advice or tips for spending time on elective in Israel.

Finally, I am extremely grateful for the very generous award from the Jewish Medical Association towards funding my elective, without which I would not have been able to have had such a thoroughly enriching academic and cultural experience.

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