

Paediatrics Department, Hadassah Ein Karem Hospital / Hebrew University Medical School, Jerusalem

I undertook my elective in the Paediatrics Department at Hadassah Ein Karem Hospital in Jerusalem. It is a large and bustling department, with a very mixed patient demographic, encompassing both Jewish and Arab Israeli children, as well as medical tourists from Gaza and the West Bank and other countries including Russia and Turkey.

I approached my elective with great excitement and with several goals and aims for my time in Jerusalem. I wanted to gain an understanding of the Israeli medical system and to use my experience as a springboard for potentially living and working in Israel in the future. I also came wanting to take my Hebrew to a greater level of proficiency, including all the medical vocabulary, and to learn more Arabic, beyond the basic conversational skills that I already had.

With these goals in mind, I was driven to participate as fully as possible in the department and to make the most of my time outside of the hospital.

Each day began with a departmental handover meeting, and from there we went to the morning rounds. The F1 equivalent doctors are called 'stagers', and, for the first few days, I shadowed a stager, learning how they each take two or three patients for the morning and examine them, talk to them and their parents, and write in the notes, before the consultant-led ward round. During the round, each stager presents their patients. After a few days I was given patients of my own to look after and I began to gain confidence in presenting in Hebrew at the ward rounds. The first day that I was able to speak with a patient in Arabic and then present their case in Hebrew was very exciting for me.

During the afternoon we would do jobs, such as taking blood or booking procedures, before going to the hospital Accident and Emergency Department to help out with new patients. I learnt so much each day, as I came across a huge range of conditions that I have never seen in the UK. The high rate of consanguinity in the Arab Muslim population means that there is a high incidence of genetic disorders. For example, there were two brothers on the ward with Omenn Syndrome, an autosomal recessive form of Severe Combined Immunodeficiency, who were awaiting bone marrow transplants. There were also children with conditions that are more prominent in the Ashkenazi Jewish communities, such as Gaucher's, and Middle Eastern/ Mediterranean conditions, such as Familial Mediterranean Fever and Thalassaemia, which I learned more about.

I was lucky enough to be involved in some incredibly interesting cases during my time at Hadassah. One particularly challenging case which stands out for me was a six-year-old girl from Gaza with liver failure due to a thrombotic disorder causing Budd-Chiari syndrome. She had travelled from Gaza to Israel under a humanitarian entry permit with her grandmother, as her mother was not able to leave her siblings. She desperately needed a liver transplant but as a non-Israeli citizen she could not go on the Israeli transplant list. Gaza has no facilities for transplants and the Palestinian Authority was refusing to pay for her to go abroad, for example to Egypt or Turkey, to receive a transplant. The picture of this little girl is one that will not leave me.

A more uplifting story was that of an Arab baby girl born prematurely at 26 weeks with a patent ductus arteriosus. She underwent a cardiac catheterization procedure to repair the PDA, despite weighing only 682 grams. This was the first time in Israel that this procedure had been carried out on

such a small, premature baby and it was an honour and a joy to be able to be in the room watching and to read about it in the news here:

http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/263116?fbclid=IwAR0XMARYepXvAvy6jgHlgnL0MVgF-KG5LwtG04kXcF_9wARgZysQCLSZZ7M

I was also lucky enough to have lots of time on the weekends and in my two weeks post placement to explore Israel. I hiked in areas all across the country, ranging from the Golan Heights to the Negev desert. During my time here I also experienced several holidays, both religious (Pesach, Easter, Ramadan) and secular (Holocaust Memorial Day, Remembrance Day, Independence Day), which gave me chance to further immerse myself in this complex and fascinating country.

I am grateful to the Jewish Medical Association for enabling me to have this rich experience. I have been able to grow and learn in so many areas, encompassing medicine, languages, culture and politics and I cannot wait to spend more time in Israel in the future. The hospital felt like an oasis of co-existence, compared to the political turmoil outside its walls, and it was a great privilege to be a part of it. I cannot thank you enough for helping me to make this possible.

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