

Paediatric Department, EMMS Hospital, Nazareth

During the Spring of 2019, I was privileged to complete my medical elective at Nazareth EMMS Hospital with support from the Jewish Medical Association. I was mainly based in the paediatric department there which consisted chiefly of neonatology and the paediatric emergency bay. Any paediatric admissions were transferred elsewhere. The placement therefore provided me with the opportunity to become very familiar with the main neonatal presentations whilst also feeling part of a very vibrant and welcoming team of clinicians and nurses.

The EMMS hospital at Nazareth was smaller than I had expected. Several times, I witnessed consultant neonatologists calling up colleagues at other hospitals who were further subspecialised as paediatric nephrologists or cardiologists for example. In the time I spent with the Israeli medical students on the wards, I was surprised to find that the renal team might be caring for just a couple of patients; the neurological department was similarly small. On the one hand this meant that the students and medical trainees were perhaps not being exposed to a very wide range of pathology within the hospital. On the other, I was able to appreciate how being in such a small hospital resulted in the students and trainees knowing absolutely everything about their patients, being very well looked after within their teams and also knowing in advance about every possible learning opportunity and taking advantage of them. For example, I went with a few medical students to watch the insertion of a PEG tube and found on arrival that the rest of the medical students were already in the room! Not only this but they had researched the procedure before and knew all the details of this patient's medical history. I have not often seen this level of educational engagement in the UK.

Despite being small, the hospital seemed to have all the facilities it needed. On occasion I witnessed patients who were critically ill in the resuscitation area being prepared for transfer to Haifa, where I was told, there were more facilities. On the whole though, the hospital at Nazareth had all it needed in terms of physical and human resources. The staff were incredibly kind and welcoming to me. I was allocated to a lovely paediatric junior trainee who took me under her wing and, with her flawless English, explained to me everything that was going on. The consultants took the time to quiz me on all sorts of neonatal conditions during and after the ward round of the neonatal intensive care unit each morning. The standard of their questions was extremely high, but this ensured that I was intellectually stimulated each day and was accumulating new knowledge all the time. Not only did they make the work interesting, but they made me feel like I was a real member of the team, inviting me to staff birthday celebrations and to spend time socially with the team.

I would undoubtedly recommend this placement to other students seeking a highly individualised elective. One might not see as wide a range of pathology as elsewhere but it is an excellent place to both consolidate the basics and learn new material in a very thorough manner with an excellent team around for support. For someone wishing to do an elective in paediatrics though I would perhaps suggest considering a hospital with a paediatrics ward as I wasn't aware that the EMMS hospital did not have one. Nonetheless the elective worked extremely well with the focus being on neonatology. I had a wonderful stay in Nazareth. I was very sad to leave the neonatal team and not to have more time with the Israeli medical students there who were so welcoming. I really enjoyed attending some of their teaching and also being able to help them a little with the material as they were several years behind me in their studies.

My sincerest thanks to the Jewish Medical Association for their financial support of this elective. I know I have gained so much from it, both in terms of medical knowledge and, perhaps as importantly, in terms of cultural enrichment.

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