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During spring 2020 I was planning to undertake a 6-week elective in the Neurosurgery department at the Beilinson Hospital with the support of the Jewish Medical Association. My goal is to specialise in a related area such as Neurosurgery/Neuroradiology/Neurology and this was an ideal opportunity to gain exposure to these fields while building connections with academics and clinicians in Israel.

I would also be engaged in a local research project during the placement investigating the molecular profile of meningiomas in patients with breast and/or gynecological cancers. Meningiomas have a predilection for females with a 3.5:1 ratio and the role of sex hormones



has been implicated. An examination of the neuropathological characteristics of meningiomas in patients with these types of cancers will improve our understanding and possibly allow for new therapeutics and care. The plan was to collect and analyse retrospective data from meningioma patients over the past 4 years alongside my clinical shadowing in the department. However, the spread of COVID-19 brought my clinical placement to a premature end.

A week after arriving in Israel I was informed by the Tel Aviv University office that all medical student clinical electives were cancelled. During this time my flight back to the UK had also been cancelled. I spent a few days trying to arrange to continue working on the neuropathology study or an alternative research project with the help of the Beilinson research coordinator as well as a former Israeli colleague of mine based in Cambridge. Everyone was extremely supportive trying to help find a project for me to engage in during the final 5 weeks of my elective. However, as the situation progressed it became clear that if I didn't leave Israel soon it would be difficult to return home. Fortunately, I ended up getting a seat on one of the last flights back to Europe.

Although my elective was cut short, I intend to continue working with the academic colleagues based in Tel Aviv on future research projects. I'm also hoping that I can come back at some point to gain further exposure to the Israeli health care system and what it's like to be a doctor there. Nonetheless, I feel very fortunate to have been able to spend the week I had there and took every advantage of gaining academic experience and exploring Tel Aviv. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the Jewish Medical Association for their support.



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