

JOHN FARNDON STUDENT ELECTIVE PRIZES

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For my medical elective I went to a mission hospital in Chitokoloki, rural Zambia. While I was there I gained considerable experience in both medicine and surgery. I was permitted to carry out minor procedures, under supervision, as well as delivering ten babies – the record for any medical student at Chitokoloki!

I had planned to carry out an audit of the use of Nevepine in pregnant women with HIV, but after meeting a child with onyalai I decided to carry out a retrospective review of all the patients diagnosed with onyalai over the past ten years.

During my time at Chitokoloki I learned a great deal about medicine, and the differences in disease & healthcare between the Western world and Sub-Saharan Africa. I would definitely consider returning on a permanent basis once qualified.

Julia Street

Mauritius is a beautiful and fascinating island with a diverse religious and cultural population, and my medical elective provided a fantastic opportunity to experience its healthcare system. I spent two months in the 500-bed government run Dr A. G. Jeetoo Hospital in downtown Port Louis. The lack of resources and financial support in the hospital did not deter the enthusiasm and dedication of the doctors I worked under. My time was split predominantly between General Surgery and Paediatrics, although I was also fortunate to spend time with the Paramedic Service (SAMU) answering emergency calls in one of the five ambulances in the country!

The large, Nightingale-style wards were hectic, out-patient clinics were often oversubscribed and patients queued from early morning to be seen. However, the highlight of my days was spent in theatre, with a truly general surgeon, who demonstrated a vast breadth of operating skill. I encountered a wide range of paediatric and surgical pathologies and met many fascinating patients, sadly often with late presentations of disease. Whilst most conditions were similar to those seen here in the UK, I saw many children with congenital abnormalities, such as imperforate anus, epispadias and hypospadias.

Elizabeth Speedy

I chose to go to Kenya for my elective firstly because I have always wanted to work in Africa. It was an ideal opportunity to test out this desire practically and discover if it was just a do-gooder's flight of fancy, or a practicable plan for my personality and abilities. Secondly, I had decided at the end of the third year that I definitely wanted to be an Ophthalmologist. One of the things that had strongly attracted me to the specialty at first was the beauty of eyes and the artistry of the operations. I was concerned to test out whether the changing of the beautiful variety of eye colours seen in a UK unit to the mono-chrome of Africa would reveal a surface attachment to the specialty or the actual depth of my vocation.

Jocelyn Cherry

'Please mister, one birr, mother-father dead.' These were the words that greeted me on arrival at the airport.

In 1984 Ethiopia shot to notoriety across the world with harrowing images of famine starved orphans and refugees. Now ranked as the third poorest nation on earth, my elective focused on general medicine in a government hospital, and the plight of the 'forgotten tribe' – the patient with obstetric fistulae. This condition is unknown in the developed world, but the story of these poor women is one that is highly emotive, and unforgettable.

Hamish McLaren

During my elective I had the opportunity to spend time in Nepal and Tonga, two countries which could not be more different, both from each other and from the UK. My aim was to find out about

the way healthcare works in these countries and to gain some perspective of the difficulties faced by doctors working in such challenging conditions, with profound financial constraints. I also took the opportunity to gain experience of medical conditions which would rarely be seen in the UK, particularly infectious diseases. Immersing myself in the cultures of the two countries made the differences even more apparent and I found that my preconceptions fell far short of the reality of the poverty and suffering I saw. My experiences have made me more appreciative of healthcare in the UK, but furthermore they have reinforced my desire to work abroad in the future and try to play some part in improving the situation there.

Amy Lord