



On June 30th 2015 I leaved The Netherlands for a very exciting opportunity. I went to Cairo, the capital city of beautiful Egypt for an internship on the anaesthesiology department in Ainshams University Specialized Hospital. My main goal was to see differences in the health system, procedures and hygienic aspects. I did not set specific goals for skills, because I am not allowed to do invasive procedures and most procedures on anaesthesiology department are invasive. This is the reason I just wanted to observe these differences and see as many as possible interesting things. The internship took place in a specialized University hospital, a semi-private clinic, which looked much better than I expected. It was a big hospital with many Operating Rooms. The operating rooms itself looked less



high tech than it looks in The Netherlands, but overall they used the same methods and materials. Our accommodation was in the student dormitory's directly next to the hospital on the same terrain. It was a good place to stay because it was safe to walk around there by yourself. We could drink coffee at the cafeteria in the

hospital and we could also buy some basic needs in the small supermarket there.

As I said before I did not learn any skills because everything they do on the department is taking history in Arabic or it were invasive procedures such as vena- and arterial punctions, central lines, giving drugs and intubing. But beside this I had a great experience in the hospital because all the doctors were very enthusiastic to explain me everything about the department, translate what they were telling the patient and show me what they were doing. My supervisor was mostly not on the department, but there was always someone I could stay with for that day. During my stay I have seen many interesting surgery's and I learned a lot about medications and procedures used in anaesthesiology.

Egypt is mostly Islamic and for me it was very interesting to see how everything is going during Ramadan. The difference between during and after Ramadan was huge in everything. There were very little surgery's planned during Ramadan, because the doctors were not able to work many hours. Everything is going slowly, people are sleeping a lot at daytime and at 19.00 everything stops, because everybody is starting to drink and eat immediately. After Ramadan everything started to be normal again. Also for me, as a foreign, non-islamic student, everything changed because it was way easier to find something to eat and drink and I did not feel ashamed to buy something to eat in public anymore. Overall a short summary of culture in Cairo is 'chaos'. People are doing what they feel like to do, they are always late and especially in traffic there are no rules. But beside that their hospitality is very good. They love to show you around and explain you everything.



They tell a lot about their country and culture and they answer all your questions about that.

Also the contact persons did what they feel like to do and were always late. In the beginning I couldn't handle this very well and I hated it, but after a while I got used to it and I was prepared for it. If they say to pick you up at 14.00, you can start getting ready at 14.00, be ready at 14.45 and be picked up around 15.00. For the rest the contact persons were very helpful with everything, they organised a lot for us and took us out every day to drink and eat something and show us as much as possible from



the country. This all made the social program very good! We went to many very nice places all over the country and we had a lot of fun. Mostly they were staying with us, but if not they make sure everything was fixed for us. They always explained a taxi driver where to bring us and discussed about the price in advance, they organized a guide for us if they were not able to go with us. I'm really happy with them they organized this all so well.

It is hard to compare Egypt to The Netherlands, because it is too different in every aspect. The main difference is organisation. Everything in The Netherlands is very well organized; the health system, poverty, working times and conditions etc.. In Egypt poor people only can visit the public hospitals, which I didn't visit, but I heard some stories about it and I think Dutch people cannot imagine how this works. In Holland we have rules for everything and you will be fined if you don't follow these rules. Also the culture is very different. In Egypt family is very important. You do everything together, you always help each other. In Holland this is different. People are more individually based. Also religion is a big difference. Of course there are many Muslim people in The Netherlands nowadays, but here are many different religions and you don't see this in public. In Egypt almost everyone is Muslim and all the country is based on this religion.

A big difference in the operation rooms in the hospital is how they treat people who are under anaesthesia. While the surgeons are operating there are students who are practicing vena punctions, placing IV-lines and canules and trying to define structures and practice anatomy with ultrasound in for example the neck or shoulder of the patient. In the beginning I was really shocked that they were doing this and acting like the patient was just a thing instead of a human being.

In my opinion the biggest problem in global health in Egypt is hygiene. Although this was a semi-specialized hospital I was shocked about this topic. In Holland we are very strict with hygienic rules but in Egypt they can learn a lot from us about that. They try to follow the rules as much as possible and they are good with things



like washing hands and using sterile gloves and materials, but the accommodation is not optimal. They don't always close the doors from the operation rooms, so it happens that there are two surgery's going on at the same time, in the room next to each other and both doors are opened and people are walking around from the first to the second room and back. Sometimes it is not even possible to close the door because it is broken. There is a big difference between the doctors and the assistants in education level and you can see the assistants don't follow the hygienic rules so good as the doctors do, maybe because they just don't know how important this is.

I am really happy I had this great opportunity for an internship. I had a lot of fun, saw a lot of the beautiful country and made very good friends. Overall the training made me realize how well everything is organized in The Netherlands and how happy I have to be to live and study here. As a future doctor I hope to invite students like me at this time on my department and show them around with the same passion as the doctors in Egypt did to me. I think it is a good experience for every medical student to see how everything works in different countries. I am also happy I learned something about the Islamic culture. There are many Muslims in The Netherlands and I think it is important to know something about all different cultures in this multicultural society.

