



Professional exchange in Hong Kong

In September 2015 I have been to Hong Kong for a professional exchange in the Prince of Wales Hospital, Shatin related to the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). The department that I have been attached to was Paediatrics. With a group of seven 4th year medical students from CUHK I followed my attachment. With most of these students I stayed in the Medical Students Hostel next to the hospital.

The first day of my attachment was also the first day Paediatrics of my group. Therefore I felt on the same level as my fellow students. The first few days I relied on my fellow students a lot because I needed to adjust to the new hospital. Every week was the same. On Mondays there were lectures, Tuesday we had clinical visit outside the Prince of Wales, for example one week we visited the Maternal and Child Health Clinic. This was an opportunity to learn more about the healthcare system for the new-born child. On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday we had clinic or ward rounds. This depended on the speciality you were attached to. The first two weeks I had mostly clinic visits, for example on endocrine, respiratory, neurology or haematology. The last two weeks mostly ward visits, with the first week the general ward and the last week the neonatal intensive care unit. The first two weeks I learned a lot about first presentation of Paediatric diseases, typical and most common diseases in Hong Kong and history taking in Children and the struggles with Chinese culture. The last two weeks were focused on treatment and hospitalization of children in Hong Kong.

In the Medical Students Hostel I had a roommate from Romania. As social program we had each other. Medical students in Hong Kong are really eager to learn everything about medicine. Therefore they spent most of their time in the library and in their room studying. But though other IFMSA experiences I already had some contacts in Hong Kong and met with them to show me their country Hong Kong. This showed me the other side of Hong Kong than just the tourist places.

My personal goals for this professional exchange was learning more about Paediatrics in a different setting. With setting I mean culture, resources and healthsystem. As Hong Kong has been a British colony till in the 1990's, I expected a lot of European and British influence.

The contact with my contact of AMSA-HK was sometimes difficult. A few days before my arrival I hadn't heard anything about the pickup or how I needed to get to my room. Luckily, my roommate, the Romanian girl already contacted me via facebook and we exchanged numbers. Afterwards, it was sometimes difficult to reach her about social program or about must see places in Hong Kong. But in contrary, my contact in the Prince of Wales of the Paediatric Department was always reachable and helpful with all my attachment problem.

Hong Kong differs a lot from the Netherlands. Hong Kong is a flourishing country and their healthcare possibilities are almost reaching the Netherlands. But in culture they differ a lot. For example in the Netherlands we have our 'own' GP. In Hong Kong the system works a bit different. There are GP's, but no one has to register at one GP. Every time they seek for a GP they can go randomly to a GP.



Another thing different about Hong Kong is family structure. In Hong Kong families there is still a hierarchy. Therefore it is sometimes hard to speak against the grandparents. One case was astonishing about a child with haemophilia. Haemophilia is an X-linked disease, therefore it is inherited from mother to male child. This was the case. Grandparents from father's side gave the mother a difficult time raising the child under the assumption that the mother withheld information about her gene pool. My colleagues told me about cases where the mother and child were abandoned from their family-in-law. This somehow shocked me in a way, that it sounds like an almost mediaeval thing about abandoning a mother and child from almost the entire family.

This exchange has thought me a lot about Paediatrics, family dynamics and different cultures. I wanted to go on exchange to learn and experience another culture. As a future doctor I am more aware now about culture and the role of family dynamics in culture and in Paediatrics. These things have changed my way of thinking in consultations with patients.



In front of the Kwong Wah hospital with my fellow students.



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View in Victoria harbour at night





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Hiking trail Dragon's Back on Hong Kong Island

