



## Internship in Rijeka (Croatia)

In September 2015, I went to Rijeka, Croatia to do an internship in KBC Rijeka (hospital) on the department of gynaecology. Another Dutch girl, Michelle, also went to the same city, the same hospital and the same department so we arranged to fly together. The first plan was to do the internship in Zagreb, but this was cancelled because of there was no accommodation for us. First this was a bit of a disappointment for us, but we think the people of CroMSIC Rijeka did a great job to receive us in their city. The accommodation, the internship in the hospital, the two meals a day in the hospital, the social programme, the free bus ticket for the whole of September, everything was arranged and arranged very good! Sunday the 30<sup>th</sup> of August we flew to Zagreb and we were picked up by the president of CroMSIC to go to Rijeka by car. The next day we started our internship at 8 am in the morning meeting where we didn't understand a word of the Croatian language but where we were introduced in English. After that, one of the doctors showed us around on the gynaecology department which consisted of one building with five floors. The first floor was family planning, the second floor normal gynaecology, the third floor obstetrics and the operation rooms, the fourth floor the maternal care and the fifth floor the neonatology. Because we were supposed to do an internship at the obstetrics part of the gynaecology, the third floor was our place to be. That was the floor where were rooms where the women could give birth to their children. The first days we walked around this floor waiting for children to be born and surprised by the NO privacy this women have. Every door was open and between the rooms there were doors of glass. Anybody on the floor could walk into the room when a woman was delivering and watch this. One time we were with 16 people in one room watching a woman giving birth! But when we understood that this was the normal way, we did the same and walked into every room when there was a woman delivering and we saw many births and we also have seen a caesarean section in the operation room. This was also an experience for us, because there were at least 14 people in the operation room and the door to the hallway was left open. Other big differences with the Netherlands were for example that they never plan a c-section, it's illegal to deliver at home and till a half year ago the husbands had to pay to be with their women while they were giving birth. The first days we were almost every day at the third floor, but you can't plan deliveries so some days we had to wait a lot. That was why we asked every doctor if there was something to see or to do that day. Sometimes there was, sometimes not, but every day we learned more about where we had to go at which time and to which doctor to see and learn things. The last week we had seen almost every floor in the gynaecology building and learned a lot! Surgery's like vaginal hysterectomy, laparatomic hysterectomy, conisations, laparoscopic surgery's, c-sections, tumor removal and so on, but also oocyte punctions, embryo transfers. On the policlinic department we saw ultrasounds, colposcopies, incontinence check-ups and other check-ups. And of course we have seen many births of baby's in all sizes, with or without episiotomy, easy and difficult deliveries, with or without anaesthesia. And on top of this, the last day we even did a presentation about our study in the Netherlands and Belgium in the morning meeting. We have learned so much of this internship, it was great!

When we weren't at the hospital we were with the other exchange students. We were with five of us. Two Dutch girls, one girl from Belgium, a boy from Greece and one boy from Finland. Almost every afternoon we did stuff together, like going to the beach, playing games, playing tennis/basketball/volleyball, shopping, watching movies and so on. We planned a trip to Triest ourselves and we went to other cities in the neighbourhood of Rijeka. It was a really nice group! But we weren't the only exchange students in Rijeka, there were also students from of Erasmus and other organizations from for example New Zealand, Poland, Bosnia, Japan, Slovakia, etc. Together with these students and the Croatians we have had really nice evenings like karaoke night, BBQ, parties, drinks, eating



XXL pizza's etc. And also to the trips of the social programme we went together. We went to the Plitvice lakes, we did a Istria trip and a Dalmatia (5-day) trip, which were all really great! The CroMSIC people and especially my contact person were really nice, they almost all tried to make our stay a very nice experience and it really was!

I've learned so much of this internship on many levels. I've learned to be assertive, because we had to be if we wanted to learn and to see things. Just ask! Of course I learned a lot about gynaecology, because we did see many things. Also my English is really improved and I know now that I can survive on my own abroad.

It was such a great and informative experience, I would recommend it to everyone and would for sure do it again! ☺

