



Attachment with Transplantation Unit, Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

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Context

Organ transplantation dated back to 1954 when the first successful kidney transplant operation was carried out in Boston, USA.¹ A year later, the first UK kidney transplant operation was performed (1). While organ transplantation carried out in Malaysian hospitals remains less than 70 cases per year (2), there are nearly 4000 organ transplantations carried out in the UK each year (3).

Reason for the idea

I would like to enrich my experience by gaining exposure in a field which is rarely encountered in Malaysia, i.e. Transplantation Surgery. I would also like to experience clinical settings of different culture and healthcare system. Furthermore, learning and assimilating positive attitudes, skills and knowledge is what I always look forward to.

Methods

I was fortunate to be accepted to have 4-week attachment with the Transplantation Surgery, Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom under the supervision of one of the transplant surgeons, Mr John Casey. Nevertheless, I received guidance from all the members in the Transplant Team. Every day, I participated in ward rounds, clerked patients and presented cases, observed and performed procedures. I joined Transplant clinics thrice weekly and Transplant assessment meetings on Friday afternoons. About twice weekly I would scrub up and have close observation of the transplantation surgeries. Every evening, I would read up subjects covered during attachment.

Evaluation

Although I had only completed three years of undergraduate medical training, I was given a lot of opportunities. One of the attitudes I learned and practiced since then was “You will never learn if you never start doing.” Since my first day there, I was given the trust to do formal admission notes as

well as progression notes where I learned from my mistakes. The doctors were very encouraging and I was able to participate actively during ward rounds discussions. Besides, I was taught and allowed to do procedures like blood taking and cultures, arterial blood sampling, intravenous cannulation, ascitic tap and drain. I was grateful that the patients were willing to allow me to perform procedures on them despite of my first times. It was hard to catch the Scottish essence at first but the people there were very nice and patient with me. I was glad that I found myself familiarized by the end of first week. It was also during this attachment that I apprehended how infection control, patient-centred care and multidisciplinary team really work. Apart from that, I had opportunities to meet with some clinical students from University of Edinburgh and a few other elective students from other countries. It was a great experience of culture and knowledge exchange besides expanding my social network. Being attached to an environment with different culture, practice and healthcare system in the international arena is indeed a very good exposure and rare opportunity. I believe and hope that every experience that I encountered would better prepare me for the upcoming challenges

Reference

1. NHS UK Organ Donation. *Transplantation Milestones*. Available online at http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/ukt/about_transplants/transplantation_milestones/
2. National Transplant Registry M. *Sixth Report of the National Transplant Registry Malaysia 2004*. Kuala Lumpur: National Transplant Registry; 2011. Available at: <http://www.mst.org.my/ntrSite/download/report2009/6thNTRreport2009.pdf>
3. NHS UK Organ Donation. *Statistics*. Available online at: <http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk/ukt/statistics/>