

Please contact the IT Officer at it@insight.org.au to be put in touch with this placement participant for further information.

Placement

London, Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital, Clinical Genetics

Dates of Placement

12 March 2018

The Application Process

Application form + 2 reference letters from clinicians

Placement Structure / Typical Day

The entire placement was observation-only outpatient clinics. Average of 1 clinic (3-5 hrs) per day, with a different clinician. I attended 4 different hospitals (GOSH, St Barts, Royal London, Wood Street) both for central clinics and outreach clinics to under-served communities within outer London. There are a wide range of specialised clinics (e.g. craniosynostosis clinic, emergency pregnancy counselling, cancer genetics, neurology, endo-oncology) so you are exposed to many many different genetic conditions each time.

Patients always attended with their families, usually for: a first assessment for a possible genetic condition, breaking bad news, counselling post-diagnosis, and receiving updates regarding research into an established disease.

Outside of these clinics (I was given a schedule early on) I was free to explore London.

Level of Flexibility on the Placement

Nil independence, the placement is entirely observational and you will not be seeing patients on your own (this is established in your paperwork).

Moderate-high flexibility: normally scheduled for just 1 clinic (3-5 hours length) per day, able to request additional clinics or to decline attending the more distant clinics. Outside of these clinics (I was given a schedule early on) I was free to explore London.

Expectations and Assessment

- Attend clinics
- Pay attention: most of the clinicians I met did not expect me to know much about genetics and were happy to teach me / answer questions
- Sometimes I was told to read up on a condition/topic prior to a clinic
- Give a 10-15 minute unit presentation at the end of the rotation. Very chilled

Skills Gained

- Counselling and communication skills
- Huge number of genetic conditions both common and incredibly rare
- Recognition of clinical signs in genetics (face, hands, feet, skeletal)

Placement Highlights

- Exposure to a wide range of genetic conditions, particularly the new and unfamiliar conditions and diagnostic dilemmas (I saw so many things that I had never even heard of and will probably never see again)
- Adult and paediatric care, including cancer genetics and pregnancy counselling for adults
- Attendance at multiple hospitals/locations within London

Challenging Aspects of the Placement

There is a lot that you don't know about genetics that you will come across for the first time in this placement, so you'll get more out of it if you do some reading.

Parents receiving genetic counselling were often very emotional.

Other Activities

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Would you recommend this placement to someone interested in global health?

Yes. England is known for several ethnic groups at high risk of consanguinity (E.g. Bengali community, travelling Irish families), and families from all these communities would attend both the central and outreach genetic clinics. There is a heavy focus on family medicine, holistic care and pregnancy planning, and at least 50% of the families I met were of low SES backgrounds.

I was seeing and reading about so many conditions and issues for the first time that every clinic felt fresh and new, even though it was all observational.