
Stories of our students

Suman Sultana Sadique - student

My name is Suman and I am a 6th year General Medicine student at the Charles University, Faculty of Medicine in Hradec Králové. I have always taken a keen interest in pursuing my career in the Republic of Ireland and I was able to get one step closer to my dreams by completing my pre-state practice in Surgery at the Galway University Hospital!

I was assigned to the team of Professor Chris Collins, a general surgeon who specialized in upper gastrointestinal surgery and bariatric procedures. The team comprised of Professor Collins, Ms Iram Hassan, a registrar in general surgery, Dr Lyndon Low, the Senior House Officer and Drs Niamh and Jing Er, the interns. Under this team, I learned and observed a lot with regards to the daily lives of doctors in the Republic of Ireland. I was quite surprised to learn how different the systems are when compared to the Czech Republic. Every day of the week was spent differently and I was eager to learn more. I spent time in the operating theatre, day surgical wards, outpatient departments and regular wards. My day began at 7.30 in the morning where the team would have their daily rounds on the patients. I then spent the rest of day assisting the doctors in various tasks, such as filling out charts, taking bloods for laboratory tests, performing cannulations, etc. Professor Collins is an extremely talented surgeon who is loved by every patient he meets for his hard work, dedication and compassion for them. Besides the details of his surgeries and clinical knowledge, he taught me proper bedside manner, etiquette and how to care for patients.

Apart from my time in general surgery, I spent one week in cardiothoracic surgery under Mr Alan Soo and one week in orthopedic surgery under Mr Shannon. Mr Soo is an excellent cardiothoracic surgeon with a passion for teaching. He was the first surgeon to introduce Endoscopic Vein Harvesting procedure in a public hospital in Ireland. Under his team I was allowed to observe a Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG) procedure where each member of the team from the surgeons and anesthesiologists to the cardiac perfusionists and scrub nurses allowed me to observe and explained every detail along the way. Mr Shannon is an orthopedic surgeon who allowed me to observe various orthopedic procedures such as internal and external fixations, epiphysiodesis and so on. He also taught me how to investigate radiographs in orthopedic patients.

Galway is a small, lively town. In a lot of ways, it reminded me of Hradec Králové. With a population of 80,000, the city boasted a vibrant city center that looked like it came out of a movie, with small colorful buildings and cobblestone streets. The people of Ireland are well known for their hospitality and despite being a foreigner, I felt as though I was finally at home. The city lies along the coast and when the weather allowed it, I walked the Salthill Promenade that ran along the Atlantic Ocean. In the weekends, I would head out into the city and I even had the chance to explore other cities such as Limerick and even the capital—Dublin. I organized trips to the beautiful landscapes that Ireland had to offer, such as the famous Cliffs of Moher and Howth, where I spent time to unwind and immerse myself in the lush green fields.

To conclude, I would like to say that I am truly grateful to the University Hospital in Hradec Kralove and the Galway University Hospital the opportunity to complete my practice in Ireland. Without the kind co-operation of the department of surgery at FNHK, it would not have been possible for me to have this experience. I have learned so much from my time there and I hope to utilize it to the best of my abilities in the future.

Aprajita Bhorkar - student

As a final medical student with an interest in pursuing neurology, I was extremely excited about the opportunity to do a clinical elective in the same field, at the University of Alabama in Birmingham, USA.

The University of Alabama Birmingham hospital is a tertiary hospital, academic health science center, and the third-largest hospital in the Southern United States. It is a highly reputed institution that specializes in improving patient outcomes through research and clinical care based on current best practices in healthcare.

In my role as a medical student and intern, I spent 4 weeks on the inpatient neurology service. Working alongside the other residents and attendings in the Neurology department, we would do rounds on the patients daily and discuss their clinical cases, progress, and management plans. I encountered a wide range of neurological conditions including but not limited to seizures, strokes, peripheral neuropathies, myelopathies, brain tumors, and pathologies, which didn't always accompany their classic textbook presentations. It was exciting to learn and present cases to my team as well as perform physical exams and use the EMR system to type notes and monitor the patient's diagnostic, imaging, and laboratory results. On average there would be around 10 – 20 patients a day on the service, of which I would present a few of them daily and follow up with them for the rest of their stay at the hospital. The residents were incredibly kind, they would teach and guide me whenever they could. I also attended daily resident lectures taught by the neurology

attendings at UAB and was allowed to assist with bedside procedures whenever possible. Attached is a photo of a lumbar puncture I assisted with!

Working alongside the UAB residents to gain hands-on experience and practical training during my time at Birmingham has allowed me to improve and strengthen my performance as a student passionate about neurology. I am grateful for the support of my home institution Charles University LFHK, my professors, and the foreign relations department for the opportunity to have been a part of the UAB IVMS program. This has been an invaluable experience to enrich my knowledge, not only currently as a medical student, but also for my future as a practicing doctor.