

## Medical Elective Report



Lisa, Laura and Robbie with Medical staff

As part of my medical elective I went to Anandaban Leprosy Mission in Nepal for 3 weeks during July/August this year.

We travelled with Etihad airlines, which I highly recommend, from Dublin to Abu Dhabi to Kathmandu. Total flight time was around 12 hours and this was the cheapest route to Kathmandu.

Anandaban hospital is located 16 kms south of the capital Kathmandu, and is set at an altitude of 5,500 feet in absolutely beautiful surroundings. However it can take a few days to adjust to the altitude!

The hospital has 90 beds for leprosy patients requiring medical care for ulcers, reactions or reconstructive surgery and 25 beds for non-leprosy (general) patients needing inpatient care, including delivery cases. It also has a laboratory, operating theatre, leprosy outpatient's clinic, and training centre and runs a leprosy control programme. We attended a very informative orientation class on leprosy at the training centre.

I went with another medical student and we stayed at the guesthouse on site at the hospital which was very comfortable and all meals as well as safe drinking water was provided.

A typical day begins with breakfast at 8am, prayer meeting at 8.30am, and then the doctors meeting at 9am where they discuss patients and plans for the day. Both the prayer and doctors meeting is in Nepali but they tried to involve us and appreciated us coming.

Then there is the option of various ward rounds including general medical ward round (things like TB, pneumonia, typhoid, UTI etc), general surgery ward round, reaction ward round, ulcer ward round, theatre and outpatient clinic. All medical notes and prescribing are in English and all the doctors speak very good English so there is plenty of opportunities to ask questions on the round. Staff at the hospital are very hard working and there is a high standard of care and aftercare for patients.

Lunch is at the guesthouse at 12pm and then in the afternoon there is theatre or outpatients department, finishing up at around 3pm each day. There is also a

physiotherapy department, laboratory, and artificial limb department which we visited.

We also attended a clinic in Patan hospital in Kathmandu which runs every Wednesday from 9am-3pm. At this clinic we were able to follow leprosy patients' right through the diagnostic process.

I gained knowledge of the symptoms, signs, management and complications of leprosy and also the profound stigma associated with the disease. There was plenty of opportunity to get alongside leprosy patients and hear their stories and examine the signs. This was one of the highlights of the elective for me.

We also had plenty of opportunities to go sightseeing and do some of the touristy things at the weekends, the hospital was very generous in the time off they gave us to go sightseeing. Nepal is a very scenic and beautiful country however June/July is monsoon season so unfortunately we didn't get to see the Himalaya Mountains!

Overall this was a really good elective which met my expectations and I would definitely recommend it.