

WORK THEWORLD

Medicine in Kathmandu

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In the summer of 2014/15 I travelled to Kathmandu in Nepal to undertake a four-week medical elective in the Kathmandu Teaching Hospital. I also spent an additional one-week living with a family in a rural village as part of Work the World's Village Healthcare Experience add-on.

I was lucky enough to spend those four weeks working in the surgical department, alternating between the general surgical GI team and the neurosurgical team. Whilst I found it difficult to be as hands-on in these teams as I would have hoped, I observed surgeries and diseases that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to see in Australia. Most surgeries were critical, complicated and painstakingly long. And the list of diseases I witnessed was rare, complex and advanced.

Being proactive is the key to a successful elective. The more questions you ask and interest you show, the more opportunities you'll be given to learn. Because the hospital is a teaching hospital, students don't look out of place here either. I felt completely integrated into my teams and had the opportunities to ask questions and for my supervisors to provide the explanations - when possible! Many of the doctors spoke English fairly well too, which was a relief especially when almost all of your patients do not.

The highlight of this trip was undeniably living among the Nepalese in a small village in the mountains. The experience to live as they do was unforgettable. Every day was a new adventure and the community was so welcoming. But working at the local health clinic was a real learning experience. The lack of understanding but pure appreciation from the patients, even though we did very little for them, still astounds me. I even got to be the doctor for the week!

I can't imagine having this experience anywhere else but Kathmandu. The destination itself offered so much. On the weekends we were able to take trips to the surrounding countryside, hike at Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park and take a short flight to Pokhara where I was lucky enough to see the Annapurna mountain range from the Buddha Stupa. At the end of my elective, I also spent a week trekking to Annapurna base camp. Incredible!

My elective was the most amazing experience I have had yet and I would definitely recommend it, and Work the World, to anyone who was interested in gaining some experience in a third world country.



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