

Manipal Teaching Hospital, Nepal

Manipal teaching hospital in Pokhara is run by the Indian Manipal College of Medical Sciences, and it provides healthcare to the public as well as training for both domestic and international medical and healthcare students.

With over 700 beds, this hospital is the largest in the region and serves a wide variety of patients. The facilities were basic but better than I had expected. The radiology department had a one slice CT scanner, a 0.35T open MRI scanner, a CR x-ray room, and a CR fluoro room, which wasn't in operation when I visited. There were also two ultrasound rooms, a mammography suite, and the dental department had a CR x-ray unit. Downstairs in the basement was the radiotherapy department, with a linear accelerator and a treatment simulation suite.



The hospital is an impressive sight as you approach it.

The purpose of my visit was purely educational, as it was my elective placement in the summer break before the start of my third year of study. The 3 weeks that I spent in the department taught me more about radiography and healthcare in general than I could have imagined, as well as reinforcing ideas and methods which I had already been taught.



The lead lined doors were rarely shut, and never locked.

In rooms where geckos and cockroaches wander freely, handwashing is a rarely practised procedure. Equipment is rinsed and reused, and surfaces such as the examination tables will still have fluids from the previous patients on them when the next patient is laying there. As you can imagine, infection is a very real risk to patients and the stories of antibiotic use are worrying.

Patient confidentiality and radiation protection are two concepts which are neither acknowledged nor adhered to in the x-ray department, but after a conversation with the medical physicist it appeared that this was an endemic problem caused by poor training and low salaries.

But aside from the depressing and unpleasant aspects, I saw some of the best examples of patient care during my placement. The breast screening program is gaining popularity, and every woman who has a mammogram will also have a follow up ultrasound of both breasts whether or not a malignancy is suspected. These scans will then be reported by two radiologists and the results will be provided the same day.



A lack of resources leads to creativity!

Unlike the long MRI waiting lists in the UK, a patient arriving with an MRI referral will usually be scanned the same day and it's the same for CT. Reports are produced immediately, usually with the

input of all the radiologists in the room, meaning that treatment can be started straight away.



Left sided vestibular schwannoma.

This is absolutely imperative, as patients here don't tend to present with mild symptoms, and usually diseases won't be diagnosed until they are chronic and advanced. Tumours will be life threatening, and neurological conditions such as neuro-cysticercosis will be well beyond the treatable stages.

Tuberculosis is widespread in Nepal, but the hospital runs a DOTS clinic and the treatment appears to be very effective.

Patients can be reluctant to go to hospital, partly because it can be expensive just to get there (ambulances are virtually non-existent) but also because it will mean having to stop work, which could result in catastrophic loss of income. There is also likely to be an

inherent fear of the unknown, as they may not wish to be treated using methods they do not understand.

Most of the patients that I saw only presented once the symptoms had become so bad that they inhibited their work. One NCC patient had ignored months of seizures, and was only brought in to the hospital by his relatives once he was completely ataxic. By this point, he had multiple large lesions throughout his brain and was unlikely to regain normal motor function.

My elective in Nepal was hugely beneficial to me and it has also influenced me to seriously consider working in a developing when I am qualified.

This report was written by Trish Hann, a radiography student at Portsmouth University. The placement was coordinated by Work The World, an agency which arranges overseas electives for healthcare students as well as qualified professionals. For more information about the hospital placements they provide, visit www.worktheworld.co.uk



"Vanishing Bone Syndrome"