

## 2010 - Oliver Walsgrove Elective Report

1. The reception we received in Gorkha was fine. Once we had tracked down Badri Maskey in his pharmacy he was able to take us to meet the family. He introduced us to Dr. Lohani and gave us a tour of the hospital which was useful. The first couple of days were a bit confusing while we worked out what was going on and where, but everyone was very helpful and we soon found our way. As we had only met Dr. Lohani it was a bit difficult to find out who the other doctors were, as we hadn't been introduced, I think it may have been beneficial if Badri could have introduced us to a few more people at the beginning. However after a few days we had met everybody. The only thing I would say to future electives is to be prepared for Gorkha to be bigger than you imagine, we thought that Gorkha would be a lot smaller than it is and we weren't prepared for the busy high street and bus stand when we arrived. It was slightly harder to find Badri Maskey's pharmacy than we thought, but it was all part of the adventure really. A simple map may be helpful?

2. The accommodation was very nice, and perfect for us. The family were friendly and good fun, our room was fine and the food delicious. It was difficult to communicate at times, but we got used to having conversations in half Nepali and half English, and we learned a lot about the Nepali culture. The view from their roof was incredible! I will try and send a few photos of us in Gorkha and around the town itself, maybe these would be helpful to give future electives a bit more information about what to expect from Gorkha and the family they will be staying with? I think it might be good to warn the future electives that the families English is good but quite limited, and they may have some difficulty at first. A phrasebook and dictionary is invaluable.

3. The time spent in hospital was very interesting, and we learned about both medical and non-medical aspects. The main thing we noticed was the differences in nursing care between Nepal and the UK, and the effects that this has on the wards. It was also interesting to see medicine practised within the limits of having few available treatments and investigations. The language barrier was difficult, and some of the doctors would explain to us in English what was going on, but others would not. It is very helpful for them to do this, and very difficult if they don't. The staff were very accommodating and friendly, but we always felt like we were just observing rather than contributing to the service. I think the main barriers to this were language and the short time we spent there, if we had a better grasp of Nepali and spent longer in the hospital, staff would begin to trust us and let us do more. The experience as it was still good, and a valuable learning experience. We didn't have a chance to do much practical work, but again I think this would have come with more time. The hospital seems to have grown rapidly and the photos we saw before going were a bit out of date. There also seemed to be periods of the day where nothing was really happening, for example, most afternoons there would be no clinics, no surgery and no ward rounds. We were not really sure what to do during these periods, and wonder if the staff had any useful things elective students could be doing during these times?

4. I would recommend that future electives avoid travelling to Gorkha by minibus, as they seem dangerous and are often involved in accidents. The larger public buses are slower but safer and cheaper. That said our bus back to Kathmandu was involved in an accident, but luckily it wasn't serious! We found that the most enjoyable way to travel in Nepal was by motorbike, but

probably can't recommend this to others due to safety! They also need to be aware of national strikes, there was a 2 week long strike while we were there. Luckily it began the day after we returned to Pokhara, but if we hadn't left that day we could have been stranded in Gorkha for a long time, as no buses or taxis were running, and the protests targeted people riding motorbikes and not respecting the Bandh. I don't know what you would do if you needed to leave Gorkha in time for a flight during these strikes, so they just need to be careful and keep an eye on what is going on elsewhere in the country.

5. The experience was definitely valuable, and I think a large part of what we learned came from staying with the family. While the hospital placement was useful, seeing how the family lived and learning of their attitudes to health and life is the main thing that I have taken away from Gorkha. I would encourage all students to spend time with the family and talk to them about as many things as possible, even though language makes this difficult. The village itself is very different to the cities of Nepal, and seeing a different way of life and different attitudes was refreshing. It was a very good place to come to compare the attitudes and care of patients with those in a city.

6. Gorkha was definitely a better experience than Manipal hospital in Pokhara. Because Gorkha is smaller and has fewer members of staff, it is much easier to get to know everyone, and be more involved. The doctors in Gorkha were much better at explaining to you what was going on, as Manipal staff were often busy. The diseases and the way they are treated are very similar between the two hospitals, with the main differences being in the limited diagnostic tests Gorkha can perform, and the limited equipment in surgery. I would have chosen to do the full elective period in Gorkha if this had been possible.

Overall we have a great time, and will recommend this placement to anyone else we know of who would like to come to Nepal. . I can email you some photos of us in Gorkha if you would like, we have several of the hospital itself as well as the house and photos from around the village?

We would like to thank you and Mr. Badri Maskey for all of your help in arranging this experience, and for all of your hard work in ensuring it went smoothly. It was a wonderful experience that I will remember for the rest of my life!

Kind regards, Oliver Walsgrove