Hippokrates Exchange 11th March-25th March 2017

by Dr Gareth Patterson GPST3

In March 2017 I was afforded the unique opportunity to travel to Berlin, Germany, to partake in a two week Hippokrates Exchange. The aim of the international scheme is to encourage the mobility of young doctors during their formative years of General Practice training or early careers, garnering a different perspective on the professional and personal lives of General Practitioners in other European countries.

Having had a longstanding interest in German culture, Berlin seemed a fitting destination for my exchange; an opportunity to learn more about the people and pass-times of the German capital, and to improve on my ability to speak the national language, but more importantly to experience first-hand the workings of General Practice. I was placed with two different General Practitioners during my two week visit; Dr Silke Mockett working in a small family run practice in Rummelsberg, and Dr Kamal Akdinizli working for Family Care, a larger multi-disciplinary practice on Karl-Marx-Allee. Both individuals were outstanding hosts, ensuring my time in Berlin was both professionally and personally beneficial.

Shadowing Dr Mockett and Dr Akdinizli, my working day was very similar to that at home. With their first patient arriving around 8am, both GP’s got to work shortly before and took the opportunity to look through and sign off blood investigations from the previous day or read through clinic letters from secondary care. Morning appointments ran until midday, after which there was a 2 hour break when they would attend to house visits, meet with colleagues to discuss practice business, and find time to eat. Their afternoon clinic would typically run until 5pm. Throughout the day they would consult with an average of 24 people face to face, with some time afforded to telephone communication with patients. Overall the practical details of the working day for these German GP’s were not too dissimilar to my own. They were under the same pressure to see a large volume of patients in a short space of time, they encountered very similar symptomatology and disease pathology, and struggled to manage or get on top of the same kind of patients that we also have difficulty with in the UK. It wasn’t in my time observing these GP’s engagement with their patients that I was struck by difference. Indeed their patient centred attitude and holistic approach to healthcare was impressive and mirrored the kind of style we endeavour to practice in in the UK. Rather it was the difference between the structures of healthcare in the UK and Germany, and the role the GP plays within that structure that impressed upon me the most during my visit.

My two weeks in Berlin were an incredible learning experience. The unique opportunity allowed me to see intimately the working of a health care system very different to that which we know in the United Kingdom. A system dictated by health insurance, the German system demonstrated to me the difficulties in working in a setting where money plays such an integral part in deciding the level of care you receive or the haste at which you can receive that care. Being able to see first-hand the challenges that manifest as a result of this approach to healthcare helped me to appreciate better the state system that we are afforded in the United Kingdom through the National Health Service. Although as a people we have many similarities, our delivery of healthcare couldn’t be more different. The state run system in the UK has many flaws, but it also ensures citizens are afforded care regardless of financial capacity, and that their care is prioritised over monetary gain. My time in Germany has made me consider involving myself more in local healthcare politics, and in doing so make concerted efforts to ensure that we preserve the system we have. In a world where capitalists and politicians might seek to gain from the misfortune of others, I return home impassioned for the NHS and empowered to ensure its survival.

ST3 Equip Celebration Day

ST3 Equip Celebration Day took place on the 1st of June at Riddel Hall, QUB. Congratulations to our ST3 trainee Dr Frew Johnston on winning the RCGP prize for his Quality Improvement Project. We wish to thank all the trainees who participated for their hard work and also thank all the trainers and clinical professionals for participating in the event.

- Trainees commencing in a GP Post for the first time between August and February will need to register for the Northern Ireland Performer’s List. You will have been sent an email detailing the steps you need to take to do this.
- ARCPs are taking place throughout the month of June and you will receive an email with your outcome as soon as possible following your ARCP. Once you have received your email don’t forget to log into ePortfolio and accept your outcome.
- Allocations have been finalised for the majority of trainees. There is an additional allocations panel happening this week so if you have yet to receive information on your future posts you will do so as soon as possible after this panel.

Dare to Excel—Educational Excellence Day 2017

Congratulations to all NIIMDTA trainees across the Specialties who won various awards at the Educational Excellence Day held on the 14th June 2017 at Stormont Hotel. GP ST3 Trainee Dr Frew Johnston won an Excellence Award in Quality Improvement for his QI/QUP project. Further congratulations to all the Clinical ADEPT Fellows who were awarded Excellence Awards for their work through the ADEPT programme.

Reach Out - Minor Surgery Course Pilot

NIMDTA GP Trainees participated in the pilot for the Reach Out Minor Surgery course on the 19th of May 2017. Reach Out has been designed to give GP trainees an opportunity to gain specialist skills and knowledge in selected, high demand clinical areas. The course has been developed by Dr Stephen McEntee, a GPwSI and a clinical leader in dermatology and Dr Finbar McGrady, a GPwSI in Medical Education and Skin Cancer. Reach Out is sponsored by the Belfast Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) as part of a programme to build capacity within primary care to support elective care reform. We hope the trainees that participated found the course interesting and beneficial and we hope to have more Reach Out sessions for trainees in the near future.

Computer Workshop

The RCGP are holding practical computer workshop on the Vision INPS, EMIS PCS and EMIS WEB computer systems. There will be demonstrations from experienced practice managers and a chance for hands on experience.

For more information click here: http://www.rcgp.org.uk/learning/northern-ireland/computer-workshop.aspx

REQUIRED READING

Please find attached the latest SAFETY & QUALITY AND STANDARDS CIRCULAR –
- How to examine newborns for red reflexes