

The Coming of Age of Multicultural Medicine and the Development of English for Medical Purposes Course with Overseas Student Exchange (EMP-OE) Program in NCKU

發展醫用英語課程暨成大醫學生海外見習交流計畫以迎接多元醫療文化時代

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傳統醫學教育著重在醫學知識的傳遞，但隨著全球化時代來臨，跨文化及英語能力顯得越來越重要。目前醫學系的海外見習計畫，提供醫學系五年級學生，一系列以學習者為中心之課程並給予合作學習的機會。為期 18 周的課程，包含醫用英語（EMP）、介紹不同國家醫療文化、模擬醫病演練等。課程結束後，學生可以透過此計劃到美國布朗大學、杜克大學、匹茲堡大學、新加坡大學、香港大學、香港中文大學、泰國瑪希隆大學、日本熊本、宮崎大學等附設醫院見習一個月。以下是這計畫的簡單介紹成效及學生心得分享。

Introduction

Traditional medical educations, especially in Asian countries, mainly emphasize on teaching medical knowledge to local students, health practitioners and professionals. However, recent health care changes (e.g. increasing nationwide multicultural populations, international medical consultations and research collaborations) being brought about by globalization have challenged the effectiveness of traditional medical education systems. In fact, Khan et al. reported from a survey in 2010 that 68% of medical schools in the United States had active student global or international health interest groups [1]. In addition, The World Health Organization's (WHO) World Health Report 2006 indicates that ~25% and ~30% of doctors working in the United States and the United Kingdom, respectively, received

their medical trainings from foreign countries [2]. Therefore, global competency including medical-sociocultural understanding and intercultural communication skills training becomes increasingly important in modern medical educations in order to prepare and empower future leaders in global health.

In response to the rapid changes in the medical environment, the College of Medicine has setup a highly focused and specialty-orientated student exchange program entitled "Medical Observership Program" with an aim to foster personal growth and global competency in medical students. As the coordinator of this program since 2012, it is my pleasure to share some of my thoughts here on "what have we learnt, as the teaching team, in the past few years" and "what did students, the program participants, actually learn and benefit" from the program.

The current Medical Observership program (running since 2012), offered to our 5th year medical students, consists of an 18 weeks-long English for Medical Purposes (EMP) course, which contains a series of learner-centered, collaborative learning projects and clinically orientated exercises, together with a month-long Overseas Practicum. The 18-weeks course contains various cultural-medical activities including lunch/dinner gathering with foreign students in NCKU, internet video conferencing with Brown medical students using Skype, and clinical interview simulations (OSCE-like) with foreigners. The course also contains seminars, which are given by the invited guest speakers (previous speakers include Assoc. Dean of the College of Medicine of Brown University and physician from Australia). Because it is important for our students to experience different medical cultures in different countries in order to improve their global view and medical competency, more than 11 program-affiliated university hospitals in the United States of America (Brown, Duke, Pittsburg), Singapore (NUS), Thailand (Mahidol), Turkey (Inonu), Hong Kong (HKU, CUHK) and Japan (Kumamoto, Miyazaki) are available for selection for their overseas practicum.

Post-program analysis

Last year, we carried out a detailed study to evaluate the effectiveness of our

program (course+practicum) in terms of improving our participant's medical-sociocultural understanding and communication skills. Generally, most of the participants agreed that their understanding on the social and medical cultures of other countries and their non-Chinese medical communication (doctor-to-doctors; doctor-to-patients) skills have been improved. Particularly, in the survey, 62% of our post-EMP course (pre-practicum) students expressed that their doctor-doctor/health care professional communication skills has been improved (Agree 59%, Strongly Agree 4%). Further improvement on these skills was reported (90% in total; Agree 60%, Strongly Agree 30%) by the students after their overseas practicum. Importantly, 67% of the post-practicum students expressed that their medical consultation/doctor-patients communication skills has been improved (Agree 37%, Strongly Agree 29.6%).

It is also worth noting that 63% of our returning students (post-practicum) expressed that they would like to work aboard (in overseas countries) in the future as compared to 41% prior to their trip (pre-practicum). The increase of percentage of students willing to work abroad after their trip is significant considering the fact that it is usually very difficult for one country's medical graduate to get a medical license from another country (e.g. Taiwan medical graduate to get a US medical license or vice versa). Also, considering that all of the participants (5th year medical students) do have an above-average to high English proficiency level (minimum TOEIC score 750 with a few in 900+ before joining the program) in Taiwan, the abovementioned language skills improvements and attitude changes do highlight the successful of our program in terms of improving student's personal growth and global competency, and assisting their career path development.

For the summer of 2015, 25 medical students went abroad for at least one month for clinical electives (overseas practicum). Here, I would like to share some of their thoughts on the program with you and below are quotes extracted from their final reports after completing the program.



Abner Yeh (葉建寬) Med 106

Visited - Coronary Care Unit (CCU),
Miriam Hospital, Warren Alpert Medical
School, Brown University, USA

(Quote)

"...The most impressive part of my overseas exchange is the attitude towards evidence-based medicine. Evidence-based medicine was incorporated into daily practice, and that is the way I think it should be. It is a way of being responsible to one's patient. Also, it is an active way of learning and being up-to-date. Certainly, reading textbooks can enable one to understand the established knowledge of a certain disease, and looking up results of trials will further compliment the information on the textbooks. Sometimes I get lazy and passive, and I want attendings to teach me; but the experience I obtained in the four weeks will serve me as a motivation and reminder to carry out evidence-based medicine at a daily basis."



Ching-Ying Ingrid Wang (王晴瑩) Med 106

Visited - Cardiothoracic Surgery, Rhode
Island Hospital, Warren Alpert Medical School,
Brown University, USA

(Quote)

"...I think what I learned the most was the attitude of "active learning".

I was in the department of cardiac surgery, a busy department with critical patients, busy surgeons, and busy physician assistants in the ICU. That was when the active learning came in and took an important role.

I learned to plan for my own learning schedule and ask for learning opportunities. In that medical culture, when you ask for it, you may have the chance to get it. So, I got

opportunities to scrub in to around ten open heart surgeries, did a few sutures or assist in surgeries.... I was curious about cardiopulmonary bypass, so I worked with perfusionists who are in charge of the bypass machine. I also worked with physician assistants in caring post-surgery patients in the ICU. I would ask if there were more patients I could approach.

I gained a lot of memorable things from this exchange program, more than what I additionally asked for...It was a great experience for me, and I learned to actively participate with the team and be responsible for my own learning. It would be an attitude I should carry on in my future learning and career."



Yu-Ming Chang (張聿民) Med106

Visited - Department of Pediatric,
Miyazaki University Hospital, Japan

(Quote)

"...After this month in Miyazaki University Hospital, the most important impact is that I am more certain that I want to be a pediatrician in

the future. I saw hope, exibility, and happiness in the Pediatric Department, and this is what I want to achieve in the future. During the elective month, I asked some pediatric doctors for their reason of becoming a pediatrician. There were many similar reasons and personalities so that they choose to dedicate in pediatrics, and I gained more condence to become a pediatrician in the future.

Also, during this month I gained much knowledge in pediatrics and general medicine. This will help me in my 6th year, intern year and even future career. Even more, I learned some special and advanced treatment only used in Japan, and the pros and cons of the different treatments. This one month experience helped me think more critically and made me able to compare different treatments according to not only evidence-based database or efcacy, but also the different culture."



Kuan-Ting Chen (陳冠廷) Med106

Visited - Turgut Ozal Hospital, Inonu University, Turkey

(Quote)

"...we participated in one department every week, which means we visited 4 different departments. The first one we had was cardiology, and it was mostly about cardiac catheterization, giving us the honor to see more than 10 cases every day. Besides that, we also participated in echocardiography and ward run. In the second week, we participated in general surgery. However, due to their fasting holiday, we only stayed for three days. During that time, we saw two different living donor liver transplant, which is the most famous surgery done by Turgut Ozal Hospital. Interventional radiology was the third one we had. For most of the time, we stayed in two operating rooms, and to participate in the procedure. It was one really great experience because we didn't have this kind of chance to focus in one specialty with residences and attending for so long. For the last week, we participated in orthopedics and plastic surgery. We learned a lot from these two departments too."



Chin-Kai Huang (黃敬凱) Med 106

Visited - Department of Endocrinology and Pulmonary, Duke Hospital, Duke University, USA

(Quote)

"...The medical students in Duke really have the ability of self-learning, and mainly from the Internet, such as the "UpToDate". They would not stay in the hospital all day long.

Once they were done with their necessary homework, they would go to library or back home to study. During the month of elective at Duke, I observed that their students had very strong skills for team work and group discussion. They also have great sense of humor so that the atmosphere in the group was always comfortable and positive. The conversations between attending doctors, residents and students were mutual, without any pressure or concern. This made me feel that it's really important to continue strengthening my ability of self-learning, team work and communication. Once you understand the core concepts, you should utilize the time efficiently to practice them. Ask more questions, make more discussions and find more resources to learn will be my goals in the future."

Remarks and Acknowledgments

It is undoubtedly that global competency training becomes increasingly important in modern medical educations in order to prepare and empower future leaders in global health. Therefore, it is important for us, as medical educators, to think about how we can prepare our medical graduates with enough competencies to work in the global settings. It is worth noting that some people may tend to focus on improving medical student's English proficiency such as grammar and presentation skills only. Although English is one of the mostly used languages for communication (English as a lingua franca) including medical communication; however, in my own opinion, a balanced competency training program including medical-sociocultural understanding and intercultural communication (both medical and non-medical) skills training should be delivered at the senior stage (5th and 6th year medical students) instead. In fact, it is equally important for our medical students to experience different cultures and to know proper use of different medical terms and communications skills when communicating with people from different countries or same country with different cultural backgrounds.

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Reference

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