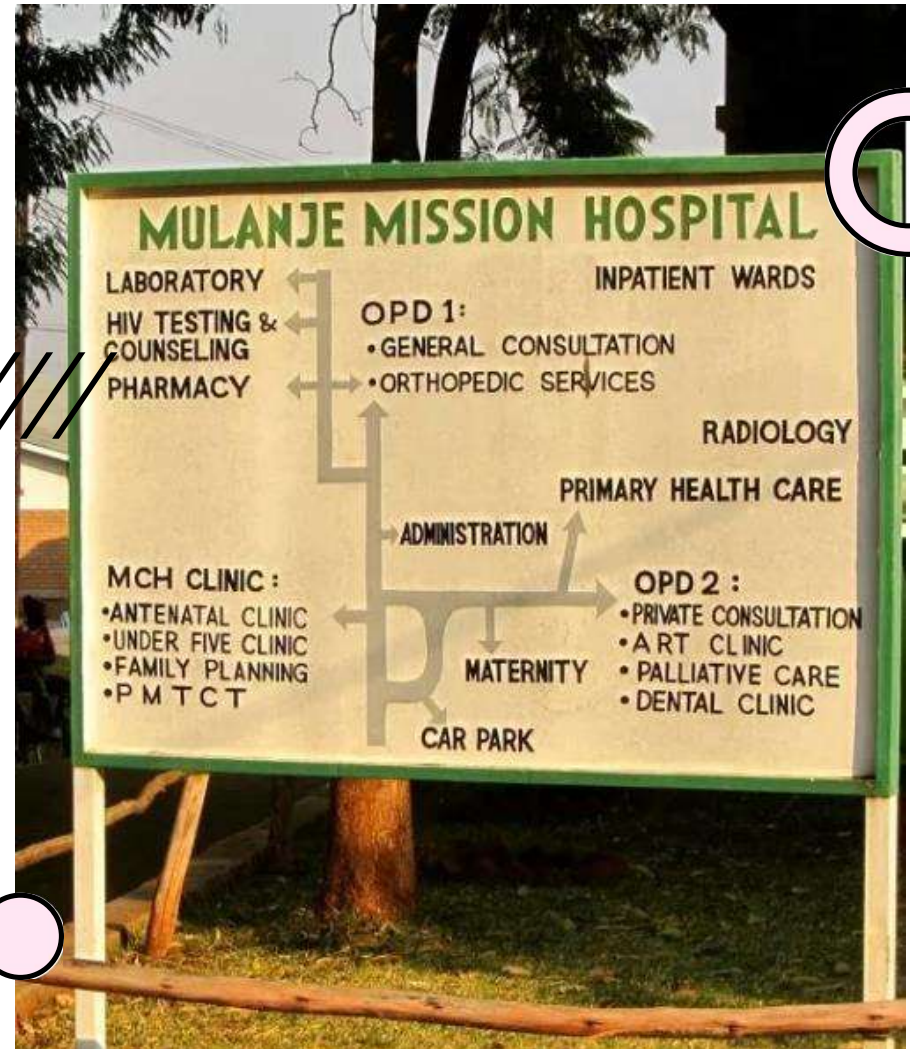


# ELECTIVE AT MULANJE MISSION HOSPITAL

FABIAH AHMED



## ○ BACKGROUND

- MMH is a 237-bed secondary healthcare facility located in southeast Malawi
- Provides healthcare services mainly to the rural communities of the Mulanje district (74 villages)
- Malawi is a **developing country**
  - The sixth poorest country in the world, with more than two-thirds of the population living below the international poverty line





# ELECTIVE PROGRAMME

- 6-8 weeks long
- 7:15am-4:00/5:00pm Monday-Friday
  - 7:15am morning handover, 3:15pm afternoon handover
- Rotate weekly around the different inpatient wards (female, male, paediatrics and maternity)
- Week in primary care (various clinics)
- On-call once a week
- One weekend shift (Saturday + Sunday)



# ○ BENEFITS

- **Combination of clinical and primary health care**
- **Close supervision from elective student coordinator or other medical officer**
- **Great and safe learning environment**
- **Lots of teaching**
  - Weekly teaching sessions from doctors
    - Clinical conditions
    - Practical procedures
    - Public health
  - Weekly continuing professional development (CPD) presentations from clinicians





# BENEFITS

- **Opportunity to do practical procedures under close supervision**
  - Pleural tap
  - Lumbar puncture
  - Ascitic tap
- **Learn how to adapt communication skills with patients**
  - Learning Chichewa language (at least basic greetings)
  - Using physical gestures more
- **Consistent meetings with elective supervisor**
  - Feel well supported
  - Ensures all your learning goals are being met
  - Supports your elective project



# ○ BENEFITS

- **Not just hospital based**

- Community outreach visits
- Home visits
- Prison visits

- **Primary care**

- Palliative care
- HIV/AIDs
- Tuberculosis clinic
- Sustainable livelihoods
- Family planning clinic

- Non-communicable disease clinic
- Orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) programme

- **Big focus on prevention**

- Malaria vector control programme
- Teenage pregnancy prevention programme



# ○ BENEFITS

- **Exposure to different healthcare environment**
- **Different medical conditions and patient populations**
  - Malaria
  - Tuberculosis
  - HIV/AIDs



# BENEFITS

MEETING OTHER MEDICAL  
ELECTIVE STUDENTS







# DRAWBACKS

- **Language barrier**

- Learning Chichewa before you go can help

- **Homesickness**

- Staying in touch with family via messaging platforms (e.g., Whatsapp) can help
- There will likely be other elective students staying with you during your time there

- **Powercuts**

- Bring a powerbank and headtorch with you





# DRAWBACKS

- **Completely different healthcare environment**
  - Nothing like the NHS
  - Need to be resourceful
  - Need to be mindful of the limited resources
  - But with the right attitude, can adapt to this and learn lots



# ○ COSTS

- **MMH**

- Affiliation fee (750 USD)
- Registration with medical council (150 USD)
- Accommodation (250USD/month)

- **Before you go**

- Flights (£1200-£1500)
- Vaccines
- Malaria prophylaxis

- **During your time there**

- Food
- Travelling



# ○ CONSIDERATIONS

- **Cultural differences**

- Remember to display cultural sensitivity
- Do not show your knees or shoulders
- Greet everyone in Chichewa
- Respect the hierarchy
- Do not act superior or expect to change anything

- **Language barrier**

- Mainly when speaking to patients
- Colleagues speak English to each other and during handover



IT'S A LOT  
OF HARD  
WORK ...





**B U T A L S O  
L O T S O F  
F U N !**



# ○ REMEMBER WHY YOU ARE THERE...

- Malawi is a poor country
- Different healthcare system
- You will see challenging things
  - Children with severe acute malnutrition
  - Patients not able to pay for treatment
  - Patients with end-stage disease



## ○ WHAT DID I LEARN?

- Appreciation of the differences in global healthcare and inequalities of access
- Expansion of clinical knowledge and practical skills
- A lot can still be achieved in a limited resource setting
- (some) Chichewa language
- Prevention is better than cure
- Personal growth and development
- Built a new personal and professional network





# ○ INTERESTED?

- Read **information** first: [www.mmh.mw/visit](http://www.mmh.mw/visit)
- If interested -> fill in **application form** and write **motivational letter**
  - Email both documents to [studentcoordinator@mmh.mw](mailto:studentcoordinator@mmh.mw) along with your **CV**



# ○ APPLICATION FORM

- A formal letter found on [www.mmh.mw/visit](http://www.mmh.mw/visit)
- Asks for standard information
  - Full name
  - University
  - Contact details
  - Proposed dates of elective
  - Learning objectives
  - Confirmation that you have read the information letter for applicants



# ○ MOTIVATIONAL LETTER

- Your own **personal reasons** for wanting to go to MMH
- Around 500 words long
- It may help to read the quarterly newspapers produced by the hospital to hear about updates and gain a better understanding of MMH ([www.mmh.mw](http://www.mmh.mw))



# ○ CONCLUSION

- Zikomo! (thank you)
- Any questions, please email me: [fabiahahmed2001@hotmail.com](mailto:fabiahahmed2001@hotmail.com)

