

Ahrandeep Aujla- Medical elective in Japan, Summer 2016

After two weeks of travelling to explore the beautiful country, I began the medical part of my elective at Jikei University Hospital, Tokyo and later travelled to the private Kameda Hospital, Kamogawa. The language barrier was initially quite an obstacle but I managed to find some doctors who were confident in English to explain many of the cases. My attempts to learn Japanese progressed rapidly during my time in the country (which everyone seemed to greatly appreciate) so later on I was able to communicate with a larger part of the team. Everyone in Japan, not just the hospitals, was so welcoming and helpful that I felt quite confident to just try speaking in broken Japanese most of the time!

On the medical side of things, I saw a version of medicine which was a mixture of private and public healthcare but had a huge emphasis on choice by the patient. Patients could choose which hospital to go to and book themselves in (no primary care like GPs really exists) but hospitals could choose to reject patients as well (apparently it's quite tricky for a foreigner to find a hospital even in emergency situations). The style of medicine was very modern and similar to the methods we use in the UK so I felt quite comfortable performing any tasks although mostly I was just observing; I didn't feel quite up to the challenge of consenting a patient in Japanese!

Overall I had an incredible experience in Japan. I got to see a different healthcare system in work and I absolutely loved the culture and the people.