

A short tale - My hospital placement experience

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We recently started our clinical experience at Eku Baptist Hospital, Eku, Delta State, Nigeria. My department thought it necessary for the weekly trips on Tuesdays to the hospital to get familiar with the hospital environment. It was always a fun-filled trip that started with its first lesson as punctuality; we had to meet up with the bus as early as 7:00 am or else miss out on the experience on that day.

It was a jolly trip every Tuesday, as we the students, were always excited at the "out of class" experience. We got to the hospital every morning and witnessed the "handing-over", which was a normal routine for the nurse on the previous shift to the nurse taking over the morning duty. It involved the nurse handing over, informing the nurse for the next shift on the state of various patients in the ward, critical conditions that required close management, and newly admitted patients. It was quite an experience as it offered me a first-hand view of what the profession is like outside the four walls of the classroom. Oh, I think I've gone too far without actually introducing myself.

Hi! I'm Oghenetega, a nursing student of Delta State University currently in my third year. I'm pretty passionate about the values of nursing but I think of it as less of a profession and more of it as an innate lifestyle, caring. Although some working conditions I've seen portray it more as an obligation, I see more to it than that. Its altruistic nature should be the core reminder of what it is about.

Now, back to the experience. It was better learning as a group than personally as it gave more room for inquiry. We rotated wards after four weeks but so far I've spent more time in the Out-Patients Department(OPD) than any other department as it's the first point of call of every incoming patient into the ward. We get to assess the vital signs and collect baseline data before visiting the physician and observe minor procedures like dressing of wounds, administration of injections and with my little knowledge of pharmacology, I was able to understand why some prescriptions were given. On some days, we stayed in the physician's office, observing some assessments he gave sequel to baseline data collected initially. We got to understand why some questions were asked and how they are to be asked.

One of the conditions that particularly stole my attention was a woman, with edema in her legs and a protruding stomach, which we learnt was a result of damage to the liver. In medical terms, cirrhosis of the liver resulted in ascites and edema. This was due to excess consumption of alcohol. I pondered for a bit how someone was willing to trade a healthy life for one that would impair Activity of Daily Living(ADL) and still be ignorant about how serious a condition she had. Well, I was in no condition to judge, but to learn.

I was also able to experience a pregnant woman advised going into labor due to macrosomia which is a condition where the child exceeded normal birth weight which was within the range of 2.5-3.5kg. The most prominent condition that was diagnosed in the community which is expected was malaria and most diagnoses showed that. The highlight of experience in one of the days of clinical experience was seeing a woman put to bed, watching the various stages of labor, and thereafter the joy at the sight of the crowning of the baby.

The experience is still ongoing, but with some smiles we've gotten, so also, we have experienced tears at some conditions. At the end of each shift by 2 pm, we all get to share our different experiences, some funny remarks like the tears of my male classmate at witnessing the pain of labor by a woman were the highlight of one day's experiences. We get into the bus and head back to school with experiences to reflect on each shift. I'm glad that I get to have such an experience, and it exposed me to a different

perspective other than a pen and paper experience. I hope to venture into better working conditions even as I advance. As a start, I have a story to share and I'm glad that it's been a blissful experience.

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