

Study of elective students

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Elective has basically two different meanings in the dictionary; *POLITICS relating to voting: involving or concerned with voting; EDUCATION not compulsory: optional rather than essential or compulsory; optional subject of study: an optional course that a student may select from among several alternatives.*

Here elective is described in relation with the education and particularly medical education. There is increasing trends of the elective in the western part of the world. After the establishment of the Bir Hospital and Institute of Medicine, it has opened the doorway for the international medical students to choose Nepal for their elective. Because of the natural beauty it poses Nepal has been one of the perfect countries for elective especially for western world.

A medical student from one medical school/college or university goes to another medical school/college, university, hospital or health organization in any part of the world to spend few days, weeks or month and observes and gains the idea about the medical education or health system which help him/her to broaden the knowledge on related fields.

Medical students from the different part of the world come to Nepal for the elective and their elective center is not limited to the medical colleges of Nepal but to the renowned hospital & health related organizations.

Center for Disease Control, International Federation of medical students associations, Adventure Alternative, Elective Network are among the various websites and organization which help in the elective in the different field of education and in the countries.

Adventure Alternative provides information regarding medical elective mainly in Nepal and Kenya and it offers opportunities for 6 or 8 week medical placements in Nepal and Kenya. They are very flexible to people's schedules and their unique selling point is that we not only provide the organization of the elective itself but the infrastructure of providing accommodation,

food, transport, airport pick-ups and a professional back-up of staff in each area.

The options they provide in Kenya and Nepal are - medical student can live care and work in various departments of a number of a hospitals and a slum clinic built by Gavin. Six weeks for £950 excl flights.

In Nepal beside their elective they can go for trekking – after working for min. period of five week in Kathmandu and then in a remote mountain village clinic working on issues of primary health care with a local doctor to the outlying area. Medical student go for three week trek to Everest Base Camp also included in above price. The period of elective depend up on the flexibility of time of the medical student.

The adventure doesn't stop here in Nepal, Himalayan trip can finish with white water rafting, and elephant back safaris or a journey through Nepal. One could also start their own overland adventure through India by train, boat and bus.

This is the organizational motive and support which provides information for the elective in Nepal and basically they are focusing on the tour travel unlike medical colleges which give inside of the diseases of the eastern world which has become history in the western world.

When I talked to a medical student about his elective in Kathmandu Medical College, I asked him- “why did he come to Nepal for his elective?” he said-“Nepal is cheap; rich in natural beauty & beside elective I want to go for trekking and rafting.” If we ask the same question more than 90% student will answer the same.

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Eoin C. Harty a 5th year medical student from University of Birmingham, UK shares – “It made me start, though, to hear the informal medical phrases, ubiquitous in England, mixed with streams of Nepali – ‘bit on the low side’, ‘common things are common’. I knew that Nepal would bring me into contact with different pathologies, but I was unprepared for level of infectious disease I would see. The acronym ‘AGE’ doesn’t exist in the UK – at first I thought patients were being admitted because of their advanced years. It meant, though, that I got plenty of practice in palpating enlarged spleens and livers, difficult to find in UK hospitals but so important for our final exams. I had to be careful when asked about their causes though – in England ‘kala-azar’ will earn you only a sarcastic comment from your consultant, whereas ‘CML’ will earn you the same here in Nepal! The other common infections here have provided new learning experiences for me. Additionally, I have a particular interest in TB, and spent sometime learning about DOTS therapy and its effects & it was also frustrating for me to see patients leave before they were ready and foregoing essential investigations and treatments because of lack of cash.”

In Kathmandu Medical College the elective has started from 2001 when clinical science of KMC was in Chhetrapati, since then numbers of student have come to KMC and learn medicine in different department.

If any medical student wants to do his/her elective in Kathmandu Medical College he/she has to go through the following procedures:

1. An application letter (e-mail) from a medical student addressing Principal of KMCTH.
2. A recommendation letter from Head of the department of his/her institution.
3. He/she has to pay 25\$ per week to KMCTH.
4. He/she has to arrange visa, air fare, lodging and food by himself/herself (Necessary arrangement can be done in these regards by the KMCTH).

For this KMCTH is providing the following facilities:

- Complete access to Library.
- Full access to internet and computer lab.
- Complete privilege to attend seminars and CME (Continue medical education).
- He/she can visit any department beside your elective in your free time.

N.B. more about elective in Kathmandu Medical College can be obtained from www.kmc.edu.np

Beside medical education medical student not only learn the medicine but also the culture as Eoin says- with four weeks in Kathmandu, it has been easy for me to do all the touristy things. I really enjoyed visiting Swoyambhunath, Bhaktapur and Patan, and my four day mountain bike tour of the central hills was amazing, taking in Nagarkot and Dhulikhel, and some pretty steep ascents and descents! Another highlight was the mountain flight – 40 minutes to reach the summit of Everest must be some sort of record! More than the tourist traps, though, I have really appreciated being able to live and work as a Nepali.

Numerous medical students are still trying for their elective in Nepal it might be due to different kind of disease they encounter or it just might be the natural beauty of Himalayas. But they don’t know where to contact and how to approach different medical colleges in Nepal. Therefore it has become necessary to establish a system in the medical college to provide them necessary information about the elective in the respective colleges.

Why don’t we create a congenial environment for the medical student for their elective? Most of the medical schools in Nepal do not have separate department for the elective. Since it is a very important aspect of communicating between the different medical schools in the world. Elective can create a long lasting relationship and exchange the different dimension of disease and the culture throughout the world.