

Military & Hospitaller Order of St Lazarus of Jerusalem Commandery of Wales

Elective Student Bursary Report Joseph Jude-Gubral Weeks Two and Three

Week Two

Jude writes ...

Week 2 has been an interesting week for me. I started my second week in general medicine ward, Ward 1 (female ward). Again, the teaching continued to be amazing and I managed to see some interesting cases. However, the event that shaped up my second week was the suicide of a final year medical student from Jaffna University.

Week Three

Jude writes ...

I was in paediatrics department during my third week of elective! Again I managed to see some more interesting cases, and had more opportunity to take histories especially from children.

I also managed to meet Dr. Joy, who was working together with a local art and performance organisation called Kaveri Kala Manram to look after people affected by leprosy. They work together with the Leprosy Mission UK.

They use the funds that they get from Leprosy Mission and through various other fundraiser activities, to financially support families with members affected by leprosy. Although leprosy treatment has significantly improved, the general stigma around leprosy is still bad in Sri Lanka, which unfortunately at times causes people affected by leprosy to be denied housing and jobs.

30–35 years ago, the oldest leprosy hospital in Sri Lanka alone– Hendala hospital– had over 2000 patients. However now, the number of people affected by Leprosy in entire Sri Lanka is roughly 2000 (of which there are roughly 35–40 leprosy affected people in Jaffna)

This reduction in number, is because of improved treatment and increased awareness amongst general public. More people are identified with leprosy at an earlier stage.

Dr. Joy and Kaveri Kala Manram get notified by Jaffna Teaching Hospital regarding people affected by leprosy and then from that point onwards, Dr. Joy and her team will be in charge of the patients' social care. Not just that, Kaveri Kala Manram also puts on small dramas and classes to teach general public about leprosy and that it is not something to be worried about, to reduce the stigma around leprosy.

It was interesting to speak to Dr. Joy regarding the social care of leprosy affected people! She also told me about her experience of working in Hendala hospital 30–35 years ago, where due to stigma, the patients were kept isolated and the doctors treating them had to wear full protective kits, whereas now due to better understanding of the condition, that was not necessary. I was also told that I can attend a leprosy clinic in my 4th week (which I will write about in my 4th week report)!