

Psycho-social-spiritual Care in Egypt

RWJMS Global Health Office Independent Project



This is the entry to Alexandria University Medical School, behind the hospital.



This is the nurse's station inside the Emergency Department.



This is the Diabetes Department that I volunteered in.

Observational Study on Health Care System in Egypt

This past summer, I was privileged to have the opportunity to explore the health care system in Egypt. I spent four weeks in Alexandria, one of Egypt's largest cities, shadowing and performing an observational study focused on the psycho-social-spiritual aspect of care in Egypt's health care system.

There are two branches of health care in Egypt, one which is government run, and another which is privately run. I was lucky to have the opportunity to see both systems in action.

I became a part of the palliative care team in the cancer department of Romany Hospital located in Al Hadra in Alexandria. This hospital is privately run and is an extension of one of the Coptic Orthodox churches in Alexandria. The idea of palliative care is relatively uncommon in Egypt, and therefore this health care team is under the guidance of the Global Cancer Care network of the United Kingdom. I spent time observing their version of palliative care with their breast cancer patients as well as sitting in on team meetings where they discussed the future of their program and how they can extend its purpose to all of Alexandria.

In addition to this experience, I was able to shadow Dr. Samir Helmy Assaad Khalil in the Alexandria University Hospital. This hospital was government-run, and so I observed the difference in care between this hospital and the Romany Hospital. Dr. Samir is the head of the Diabetes and Metabolism Unit in the hospital, and so most of my time was in this unit. Occasionally, I was given the opportunity to spend hours in the Emergency Department of the hospital with one of Dr. Samir's internal medicine residents, Dr. Nermein Danial, which allowed me to observe more in terms of the care doctors provide their patients.

I have learned Arabic, and was able to practice speaking and reading the language when talking to the patients as well as the doctors, nurses, and other members of the health care team. I was also able to learn more about the culture in Egypt in my time there. I went sight seeing in many of the ancient monasteries in and

around Alexandria, and I observed the society and it's flow during the month of Ramadan, one of the high holy times for the Muslim people of Egypt.

All in all, this experience was truly eye- opening within the realm of health care, and it is through my observations there and many connections I was able to make with various members of the health care team, that I hope to continue expanding my global health experiences, bringing everything into my future practice as a medical doctor. After spending the past summer in the hospitals in Egypt, I have grown even more interested in doing an away rotation, if possible, during my fourth year. I also now have a renewed desire to serve in other countries once I become a licensed and practicing physician.



This is my hosts and I at an aquarium in Alexandria.



While site seeing, my host family took me to an ancient monastery in Alexandria.



This is the entry to Alexandria University Hospital.