

My Internship Experience at Hyogo Medical University: A Journey in Cardiovascular Medicine and Anesthesiology

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Internships are key learning moments in any medical student's journey, and my time at Hyogo Medical University in Japan was nothing short of exceptional. During my internship in the Department of Cardiovascular Medicine and Anesthesiology, I was exposed to the depth of medical practice, technical expertise, and the cultural nuances that shape healthcare systems. The experience was marked by the generosity of the doctors, who were not only excellent clinicians but also dedicated teachers. They patiently explained complex procedures, facilitated discussions, and provided us with insights into how healthcare in Japan compares to that in Croatia.

A Warm Welcome and an Engaging Environment

From the very beginning, the doctors at Hyogo Medical University made us feel welcome. Despite the busy schedules they maintained, they took the time to introduce us to the hospital's workings and guided us through their departments. Their warmth and hospitality created a comfortable learning environment where questions were encouraged, and curiosity was nurtured. The mentorship I received during my time there was one of the highlights of the internship. Each day was an opportunity to learn something new, whether it was about the intricacies of patient care or the behind-the-scenes logistics of managing a hospital.

Learning in the Cardiovascular Medicine Department

The Department of Cardiovascular Medicine was one of the most dynamic areas I had the chance to explore. Cardiovascular disease is a significant global health issue, and the complexity of diagnosing and treating patients with heart conditions was fascinating. I was able to observe a wide array of procedures, from non-invasive diagnostics like echocardiograms to more intensive interventions such as catheterizations.

The doctors did not just perform their duties; they went the extra mile to explain each step of the process, ensuring we understood the rationale behind their decisions. They patiently explained how various cardiovascular diseases manifest, how they are diagnosed, and the treatment plans tailored to individual patients.

One particularly enlightening aspect was learning how Japanese doctors approach preventive care in cardiovascular medicine, emphasizing early diagnosis and lifestyle modifications. This preventive focus contrasted with the more reactive approach often seen in Croatia, providing me with valuable insights into how cultural and systemic differences shape healthcare delivery.

Exploring the World of Anesthesiology

The other half of my internship was spent in the Department of Anesthesiology, where I gained a deeper appreciation for the critical role anesthesiologists play in patient care. The precision and skill involved in administering anesthesia, monitoring vital signs, and ensuring patient's safety during surgeries were awe-inspiring. Whether it was managing anesthesia for a simple procedure or working with a high-risk cardiovascular patient, the level of attention to detail was immense.

The doctors in the anesthesiology department were exceptional in their willingness to teach. They took us through various types of anesthesia, including general, local, and regional, explaining the specific indications for each and the potential complications. I was particularly interested in how anesthesia is managed in patients with cardiovascular issues, where the risks are higher, and the need for precise control over blood pressure, heart rate, and other factors is critical. I observed multiple procedures where these complexities came into play, and it was remarkable to see how the anesthesiologists handled challenging situations with calm precision.

A Cross-Cultural Exchange: Comparing Japanese and Croatian Healthcare

One of the most enriching parts of the internship was the opportunity to discuss and compare the Japanese healthcare system with the Croatian system. During breaks and less hectic periods, the doctors would often engage us in discussions about the differences between healthcare practices in Japan and Croatia. These conversations were insightful and provided a deeper understanding of how culture, economics, and government policies influence medical care in different countries.

In Japan, the emphasis on preventative care and early intervention was evident. There was a strong focus on regular health check-ups and early detection of diseases, which seemed to reduce the burden on emergency care and allowed for better long-term management of chronic conditions. This approach contrasted with the Croatian system, where preventive measures are less emphasized, and the healthcare infrastructure is often more reactive, dealing with issues as they arise.

The Impact of Mentorship

What made this internship truly special was the mentorship I received. The doctors at Hyogo Medical University were not only experts in their respective fields but also passionate educators. They were always available to answer questions, clarify concepts, and provide feedback. Their teaching extended beyond the technical aspects of medicine; they also shared their personal experiences, challenges, and triumphs, giving us a glimpse into the realities of a medical career.

The collaborative nature of the Japanese healthcare system also stood out during my time there. Whether in the operating room, during patient rounds, or while discussing case studies, the doctors worked seamlessly as a team. Each member had a specific role, but they were all united by the common goal of providing the best care possible.

This sense of teamwork and shared responsibility is something I deeply admired and hope to bring into my own practice in the future.

Conclusion: A Transformative Experience

My internship at Hyogo Medical University was a truly transformative experience. The time I spent in the Departments of Cardiovascular Medicine and Anesthesiology provided me with invaluable clinical knowledge, and a deep appreciation for the importance of patient-centered care. The doctors I worked with not only taught me about the medical field but also inspired me with their dedication to their patients and their willingness to teach.

I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have learned from such skilled professionals and to have been part of the Hyogo Medical University team, even for a short time.