

A transformative experience: my elective course in Turkey

I am Osama Aldabbour, a sixth-year medical student at the Islamic University of Gaza. In the past month, I participated in an elective training course at the Cardiovascular Surgery Department at Göztepe Prof. Dr. Süleyman Yalçın Şehir Hospital in Istanbul, Turkey. This exceptional learning opportunity was made possible by the generous sponsorship of F.Q.M.S and the collaboration of the Palestinian Medical Forum and the MASAM organization.

Upon my arrival in Istanbul, I was welcomed by Sumeyye Kesgin, a Turkish medical student and our contact from MASAM. She guided us through the hospital, introducing us to our esteemed professors. Among them, my Professor, Ebuzer Aydin, the head of the Cardiovascular Surgery Department, left an indelible impression on me. His expertise as a surgeon and his insights on life itself were profound and enlightening.

The following day, I had the privilege of participating in the department's morning meeting and entering the operating room. This marked the commencement of a transformative journey. During my time there, I attended a fistula operation under the guidance of Dr. Bilal, a fourth-year resident, who taught me about surgical scrubbing techniques and suture methods. That day, I also attended a major procedure: an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm repair. This complex surgery provided invaluable exposure to the collaborative dynamics between surgeons and interventional radiologists, broadening my perspectives considerably.

A highlight of this course was the pivotal day of July 24th. This was the day I witnessed an open-heart surgery for the first time. The complexity of the procedure, involving two coronary bypasses, mitral valve replacement, and tricuspid valve annuloplasty, kept us engaged for an exhaustive seven hours. Dr. Ebuzer's invitation to assist during the surgery was a defining moment, allowing me to feel the beating heart firsthand.

As the course drew to a close, I had the pleasure of interacting further with the department's doctors, notably during Dr. Fatih's birthday celebration. Their warmth and hospitality were palpable, solidifying my appreciation for their mentorship. In a gesture of gratitude, I presented them with hand-made medals representing Palestine and the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Outside of the hospital setting, I explored the historic city of Istanbul, visiting landmarks such as Hagia Sophia and the walls of Constantinople.

My encounter with Dr. Orhan Alimoğlu, our course coordinator from MASAM, was enlightening. Over lunch, we engaged in conversations about the challenges faced by medical students in both Gaza and Turkey, gaining a deeper understanding of the medical landscape in Turkey.

In conclusion, this experience broadened my perspectives beyond the medical realm. It also granted me the remarkable opportunity to connect with individuals hailing from diverse nations across the globe, marking the founding moment of fresh bonds and potential partnerships.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Palestinian Medical Forum, MASAM organization, the F.Q.M.S, and the dedicated professionals at Göztepe Prof. Dr. Süleyman Yalçın Şehir Hospital for this enriching opportunity.

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