

BDIAP Grant Medical Elective Report Re - 10/06/24 – 05/07/24 Placement in the Dept of Pathology, Mater Dei Hospital, Malta

I would once again like to express my gratitude for the financial support the academy has provided during my medical elective. It was truly a once in a lifetime experience and saw me rotate through a varied list of specialities and experiences.

Mater Dei Hospital is the largest on the island of Malta, and the central hub for all pathology samples nationwide. I spent 4 weeks here, organised as follows. My first week was in Histopathology, under my placement supervisor Dr Ceci and her colleagues. I was able to join in with specialist trainee teaching sessions, discuss cases and watch slide reporting on the multi-header, and was involved in a few frozen section procedures and reporting. During the first week I was also privileged enough to be present at, and assist in, General and Forensic Post-mortems with consultants and trainees. With the advent and switch to digital pathology at the hospital this year, the MDT's at the hospital were informative and educational, with slides being projected in large seminar rooms.

On my second week, I worked with Chemical and Molecular Pathologists, and also with the Immunohistochemistry team in the lab. I was also able to observe more closely the process from cut up, to slide production, to reporting. The Trainees and Scientists were very supportive and passionate, and let me join in with all the steps in the process whenever I could.

Through weeks 3 and 4, I was also lucky enough to attend Haematology ward rounds and clinics, where my knowledge of haematological conditions and malignancies was greatly improved. Seeing Next Generation Sequencing from first principles in the molecular lab, and then its implications in patient treatment with the haematologists, was fascinating.

Whilst in Malta I was lucky enough to explore the Island and Gozo, visiting medieval (and more contemporary) battlements and citadels, as well as the gorgeous beaches and towns. My time in Malta also saw the great Feast of St Peter and Paul, celebrated with parties, food, and fireworks all over the island. I was also lucky enough to visit the Sacra Infermia in Valletta, a medieval hospital with its 480-foot-long ward.

Malta is a culturally rich country, with extremely friendly people. I look forward to returning. I thoroughly enjoyed my placement here and would recommend it to any medical student interested in all the disciplines of Lab Medicine!

