

Global Health in Eldoret, Kenya
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I had the extraordinary opportunity of spending my last two months of medical school on a global health elective in Eldoret, Kenya – home of the AMPATH partnership with Moi University and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH). As I was preparing for the trip, I was getting excited to put my four years of hard work to use. However, what I didn't expect was for my perspective of global health to change in just two short months.

I spent about one month rotating through the pediatric hospital wards and about 2 weeks rotating through the adult hospital wards. I also had the opportunity to spend some time in a gastroenterology outpatient clinic, the cardiac ICU, a remote, rural AMPATH HIV clinic, and a

tuberculosis lab. These experiences allowed me to gain a broad understanding of how the healthcare system in Kenya functions from remote clinics, to tertiary outpatient clinics, to hospital medicine. I was able to work with Kenyan medical students, residents, pharmacists, nurses, and attending physicians to see how patient care and team structure varies in the Kenyan healthcare system.

I was challenged every day mentally and emotionally on the wards. I saw the extremes of poverty and how it plays a role in the healthcare system. Often times two, even three, of my patients had to share the same hospital bed. We often did not have the resources or medications need to treat their illness, or if we did, patients often times could not afford them. I sometimes found myself becoming frustrated by the system or my inability to do more. But the most important lesson in resiliency I learned through all of this is that you can always provide compassion.

Outside of the hospital, I spent my time learning Swahili, enjoying the local cuisine (always with a side of chapati), visiting national parks, and getting a kitenge outfit made by Mary, the local seamstress. By the end of my time in Kenya, I had made some truly remarkable connections with my new friends, connections that I still continue to keep in touch with through WhatsApp. I was fortunate to be able to visit the extremely diverse landscape of Kenya – from the plains on safari at the Mara, to the top of a nearly 14,000-foot Mount Elgon, to climbing the rim of an extinct volcano at Mount Longonot, to hiking through a rainforest at Kakamega. Along the way, I got to meet so many incredible people who have truly left a lasting impact on my life.

As my trip was winding down, the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to make a large global impact and unfortunately cut my trip short. I had the unique opportunity to see first-hand Kenya's response to the approaching threat. I am extremely grateful for the time that I was able to spend on my elective and the lessons I was able to learn. This is an experience that I will

carry with me for the rest of my life, utilizing the lessons I learned to improve myself and the care I will give to my future patients. I cannot wait to visit Kenya again in the future!





