



**Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital,
Mahidol University**

Siriraj Fellow Exchange Program

**To University of California, Los Angeles,
United States of America**

(Period of visit from 06/01/2020 to 31/1/2020)



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Study Year: second year, Pediatric Infectious Disease Fellow

Overseas Clinical Elective Rotation Final Report

1. Introduction

My name is Plobkwon Ungchusak. I have graduated the medical school from the Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital, Mahidol University and residency training in pediatrics from Maharaj Nakorn Rachasima Provincial Hospital. I am currently a second year fellow at the Division of Pediatrics Infectious Disease, Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital. My aim is to be a successful pediatric infectious doctor who can improve both the patients' health and strengthen health care system in Thailand

2. University Review

Last month (January 2020) I had an opportunity to visit UCLA Mattel children's hospital for an overseas observership program. Mattel children's hospital is one of the hospitals in Ronald Reagan Medical Center, University of Los Angeles (UCLA)



Mattel children's hospital locate on the 3rd and 5th floor of Ronal Reagan UCLA Medical center in Westwood plaza, LA. Los Angeles city is in the southern of California and it is next to Pacific Ocean. Mattel children's hospital has 131 inpatient beds including Westwood Campus (44 beds in the Pediatric Unit, 22 beds in the Neonatal ICU, 18 beds in the Pediatric ICU, 6 beds in the Pediatric Cardiac ICU) and Santa Monica campus (25beds in the Pediatric Unit, 16 beds

in the Neonatal ICU)

UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital has been recognized for excellence in all 10 specialties measured in the 2016-2017 Best Children's Hospital rankings published by U.S. News and World Report. Not only the excellence in specialties, Mattel children's hospital is also renowned in child-friendly decoration. The "welcome wall", nurse counter, and patients' lounge serve as a cheerful environment to help ease the anxiety of sick and frightened children.

3. Expectation and Objective

The expectation and aim for my elective observership program are as following

- I want to experience local diseases in U.S. that are not common in Thailand
- To observe new drugs in both clinical application and pharmacology knowledge
- To observe clinical management in the setting of resource-rich country
- To strengthen my English proficiency
- To make a connection between institution

- To Learn more about the health care system within U.S. and compare benefits and drawback

4. Knowledge/Experience gained

Pediatric infectious disease at UCLA has 9 staffs. Dr. Grace Aldrovandi is the division chief. Attending staff rotates every week. ID team include of an attending staff and one ID fellow. There is no pediatric resident in ID rotation. I met Rachel who was a second year fellow that on service in January. The activities of my observership program were pre-round with ID fellow, ward round with attending staff, ID conference (Monday), resident noon-conference (Tuesday-Thursday), ID clinic, HIV clinic. Because I don't have a doctor's license in U.S. so I have to be with fellow all the time. Rachel is very kind to me, and she was so active. She briefly told me about every case that we were consulted We've shared our experiences in management of the patient. There were 2-4 cases consult each day. My attending staff in the first week was Dr. Annabelle. She is nice, and she's always pay attention in any of my questions. She gave me an opportunity to discuss the case and present an interesting case from Siriraj Hospital (neonatal chikungunya infection). At UCLA the diseases differ from Thailand. Some organisms are not found in Thailand. My new knowledge is Coccidioides. Rachel told me that 'Cocci' are very common in UCLA and she taught me an important point of Coccidioides. Most cases of Coccidioides present with pulmonary symptoms, and it can be infected in both healthy host and immunocompromised host.



On the other hand, some organisms are rare in U.S. such as tropical diseases. I had an opportunity to share the experience in tropical diseases in Siriraj Hospital. We discussed about Dengue infection, Zika virus, and chikungunya virus in Thailand, which are very common. On my 3rd week, I was with Dr. Deville. He let me joined the out-patient department which included HIV clinic and ID clinic. About the infection control. The patient's room is a single-patient room. In front of the door there are 2 alcohol hand rub machines and also another an alcohol machine in the patient's room. Hand hygiene is a first prioritization for everyone.

To compare the healthcare system between Thailand and U.S., I've found that children in U.S. have more vaccine coverage than Thailand. The cost of healthcare service was mainly paid by health insurance in U.S. About the facilities in UCLA, I've found that the hospital's work are paperless. All the patient's data is in a computer which only healthcare personnel who had

registered can access. The admission notes, progress notes or nurse notes are in the computer. I think the benefit of computer-based system are the convenient and security but the drawback are the cost and the system need to be well planned before it's launched.

For the education, Pediatric resident and fellow have their rooms with computers. The hospital provides internet access to search the journal for self study. They use evidence based medicine. When there was a question about the patient, they solved it with the knowledge from up-to-date journal. They also search for new knowledges and do a clinical trial. Dr. Deville told me about the clinical trial of new antifungal drug "Isavuconazole" which was approved for adult patient but now he is doing a trial in children.

OPD cases are similar to our clinic, but I've found that parents are more educated than parents in Thailand. Many parents can remember the name of antibiotics or drug that their child received. One thing that I'm really appreciated is that the doctor print out the information about the disease and also child health supervision detail according to the patient's age for every parent.

In my 4th week of elective rotation, my attending was Dr. Krogstad. He is wise and omniscient. My impression to him was when he talked to the patient. He explained the parents about their child's illness and made them feel eased and confident.

Moreover, not only the knowledge I've gain from UCLA, I've made new friends. I've met 2 pediatric ID fellows there, Rachel and Caitlin. We worked together and shared the experience in infectious disease. Also from this elective program, I've found a great friendship from Thai residents too. Because I went to UCLA with 3 other pediatric residents from Siriraj Hospital. We stayed in the same apartment for a month. We ate, slept and traveled to many places together. It was a precious memory for me.

5. Benefits

I've gained more knowledge when I visited UCLA. I think communication skill is very important to our job, and I saw a good role model doctor there. It motivates me to be a better physician. I've seen innovation for both laboratory investigation and treatment that help the patient. I want to share the experience and knowledge to my resident at Siriraj Hospital and my patients. Right now the world is changing and people around the world are connected. The doctor who are not up to date can do harm to the patient. I think another benefit of this elective program is to make a connection between institution to exchange the experience, and I'm so glad to visit UCLA.

Moreover, I've improved my English skill. Spending a month abroad made me familiar to talk to a foreigner. I can understand a basic daily conversation, and now I'm more confident in speaking English.

6. Life in abroad

This is my second time living abroad. UCLA didn't provide a residence for the visiting doctor. Me and my friends (Pediatric resident from Siriraj Hospital) booked an apartment from air BNB website. There are 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a kitchen, a living room, and also a washing machine in our room. It took about 10-15 minutes to walk to the hospital. On weekday we cooked food for breakfast and dinner. On the weekend, we usually ate outside. People in LA are kind and polite, but there were a lot of homeless on the road. The weather was really nice, not too cold or too hot. The sky was clear and no pollution. Fortunately, there was no rain when I was there. Me and my friends went to many places in LA and also other cities. We went to San-Francisco on the first weekend, then we spent a next weekend at Universal studio in LA. The third weekend we went to Las Vegas and Antelope canyon and Grand canyon. Antelope canyon was an amazing tourist attraction. About the transportation in LA, there are public bus and metro but most people there use their own car. Around the university campus is a nice place. There are many restaurants, coffee shops, supermarket and drugstore near my place so I can walk to these places easily.

7. Future plan

My future plan is to work as a pediatrician in Bangkok (my hometown). Right now I'm in the last year of training for fellowship. I'm free-training and now I'm looking for a job in the government hospital in Bangkok. I want to work in a clinical field and also work in a research field. My goal is to work with Pediatric ID society of Thailand to strengthen the immunization program and reduce the preventable infectious disease in children.

8. Recommendations

First, I'm highly recommend other residents or fellows to participate in oversea clinical elective rotation. I've gained experience more than I could expect. The cost is expensive, but it's worth to pay. Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital provided me a fund for my program. Many people think that it is hard to get this fund, but I think it's not. Preparing is a key for every achievement.

To improve this program, I think it needs more advertisement because some people do not know about this great program.

Finally, thank you to the international relations team, Faculty of Medicine Siriraj Hospital and all of staff of pediatric ID department who gave me this opportunity to gain more experiences and see advanced innovations in United States.

