

Report from 18 weeks´ clinical placement in Stockholm, Sweden

1. Introduction

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Clinical placement: St. Görans sjukhus, ASIH Solna and Danderyds sjukhus

Study period: January 2011 - May 2011

2. Description of clinical placement

I had the great opportunity to spend my clinical practice at three different places, which gave me a lot of insight in the Swedish health care system. St.Görans sjukhus and Danderyds sjukhus are both large hospitals, while ASIH means palliative home care. In St. Görans sjukhus I spend seven weeks in a medical emergency care section, with mostly patients with heart and lung diseases. In ASIH I spend four weeks, following a nurse providing specialized care for mostly cancer patients in the palliative stage. In Danderyds sjukhus I spend six weeks in a surgical and urological section.

3. Description of and reflection on learning situations

I learned a lot at all of my clinical placements. In the medical emergency care section I learned to work under time pressure, because many of the patients needed help immediately and the nurses had to check on the ECG- recording constantly. It was a challenge for me to get to know new patients all the time, as many of the patients only spent some hours or a few days in our section. I feel that I improved my communication skills in this aspect. The first days I was very confused, but it was a great feeling to realize that I could handle many situations much better after a while. I also got the possibility to observe some medical check-ups, which I found very interesting

In the surgical and urological section I could improve my theoretical knowledge on urological diseases and also my practical skills. I feel that I got a good insight, as I helped to prepare patients for surgeries, watched some surgeries and helped to take care of them afterwards, including talking to family members and working together with members of other professions like assistant nurses and physiotherapists.

The most challenging, but also most rewarding, experience for me was my placement in palliative home care. I learned so much about communicating with patients and their loved ones, in the probably most difficult time of their lives. And I also learned that it is not easy to work as a nurse in the home of the patients, because you are alone, you have no one to ask for immediate help and you have to bring all you equipment with you. But at the same time it is also a fantastic way of working, because you have the possibility and also the responsibility to take care of the patients holistically, to be open to talk to them about everything that might bother them, and to give them your time, so that

they feel that you care about them. That is something that I miss a little bit in hospital care, that you usually have too little time to spend with your patients. All of my tutor nurses took good care of me and they were all very skilled, so I could learn a lot from them.

4. Evaluation of clinical placement period

• Information prior to departure

My hosting school was Sophiahemmet högskola (Sophiahemmet university college), and they provided me with all necessary information prior to departure. They also organized housing for me, which was a great relief as it is very difficult to find something affordable in Stockholm on your own. I felt very well prepared to come to Stockholm.

• Reception

When I arrived in Stockholm I got some of the information I needed, but I had to call several times in the following weeks to get information, which the responsible staff at the school apparently forgot to give to me. But I was very well taken care of by my contact nurses and after a while I also got contact with two students from the international committee of my school and we met several times later on.

• Study environment

I feel that it was really great for me to come to Stockholm as all my clinical placements turned out to be both interesting and challenging. I also attended some practical trainings and reflection meetings, which were organized by Sophiahemmet högskola and they were good, as well.

• Self evaluation

I was very motivated and expressed my interest in all of my placements. I also tried my best to learn and grow as much as possible in my time in Stockholm. I was aware of the fact that I can be very thankful to have the possibility to experience so much in such a short period of time and I tried to use the time as effectively as I could.

• Housing conditions

I lived in a student dormitory not far away from the city centre. Sophiahemmet högskola provided a room for me and I was very satisfied with it. I had my own bathroom and shared the kitchen with eleven other students from several different countries.

• Economy

As I study in Norway, Stockholm was slightly cheaper for me, when it comes to food and clothing, but my room cost the same as in Norway. I always live quite frugally, so I didn't have financial problems.

• Culture

Most of the Swedish people I met in Stockholm were very friendly and open and I felt welcome from the first day in all of my placements as everyone asked me questions and wanted to make me feel comfortable. I am very grateful for that.

- **Communication/transport**

I bought myself a public transportation pass, which costs about 150 Euro for students for three months. I found that price acceptable, as the pass allows you to travel not only in Stockholm but also in the surrounding area of the city, which I did several times.

- **Teacher/tutor nurse feedback**

I felt that the feedback I got from both teachers and tutor nurses was very good, as I got constructive criticism in the aspects I know I have to work on further, but also a lot of positive feedback, which strengthened my self-confidence.

- **Language**

As I speak Norwegian (which is very similar to Swedish) and tried to get used to understanding Swedish by listening to Swedish radio programmes before I went on exchange, I learned the language quite quickly. I think to be a student in a hospital is one of the best opportunities to learn a new language, as you have to communicate with colleagues, patients and family members.

- **Student host organisation (if applicable)**

I don't think that the student host organisation was very well prepared to take of foreign students. I think the reason for that is that the school is very small and doesn't have a lot of exchange students and I was the first student who stayed for a whole semester. But I am sure that they will learn from the experience of having had me there.

5. Good advice/suggestions for improvement

I would recommend everyone who has the possibility to do part of his clinical placement in Stockholm to take that chance, as it was a great experience for me. Stockholm is a very beautiful city and as a nursing student you can really feel welcomed here.