

Report from Clinical Placement Abroad

1. Introduction

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Clinical placement: Åland's central hospital, Mariehamn Antenatal Clinic

Study period: 05/2016

2. Description of clinical placement

My internship place was at the antenatal clinic in Mariehamn, Åland Islands. There are two antenatal clinics in Åland Islands, one in Godby and one in Mariehamn. Mariehamn takes care of women and families who live in the southern municipalities of Åland Islands where as Godby is responsible for the northern municipalities. Antenatal care of women and families who live in the smaller island is taken care of the local public health nurses. Women come to the main Island four weeks before they are due to deliver.

There works two midwives full time and one part time at the antenatal clinic in Mariehamn. They look after the women till around 36-37 weeks of pregnancy. After that the mothers and families will start having their antenatal visits with a midwife who also works at the delivery ward. Physically both antenatal clinics are practically next to each other, just a glass door separating the antenatal clinic from the ward. The reason why the women start having their antenatal visits with a midwife who also works at the delivery ward is that then the women and families have the possibility to get to know the staff who works at the delivery- and postnatal ward.

The antenatal clinic in Mariehamn is physically located next to the combined postnatal and delivery ward in the Ålands central hospital. Also the gynecological clinic where for example the routine ultrasounds are made is also located on the same floor. The physical environment makes co-operation with the specialised care in the hospital smooth and easy. There are also regular meetings between antenatal clinic, gynecological clinic and delivery ward to discuss the care of women who have high risk pregnancies.

Antenatal clinic in Mariehamn was a good learning environment to expand on your midwifery skills. Guidance was supportive and helpful and atmosphere is friendly and welcoming.

3. Description of and reflection on learning situations

On the first days I watched beside when my supervisor was working and quite soon I started taking more and more responsibility. On my last week I started having my own patients so that my supervisor sat on the side. I also had few clients on my own when my supervisor was not in the room but she was available if I needed to consult her. Most of women who we took care of had normal pregnancies but there were also some risk pregnancies. I learned a lot about midwifery at the antenatal clinic. I became more skilled in my clinical skills as well as in guiding and supporting the women and their families. I also further developed my Swedish language skills.

4. Evaluation of clinical placement period

Information before arriving to Åland Islands was sufficient. The reception from the hospital during my whole stay was very friendly.

The study environment for me was basically my internship place and it supported my learning. The hospital and the antenatal clinic was very welcoming visually than many hospitals where I have done internships before.

The house where I lived was located close to the hospital which made it convenient for me. The grocery stores were also relatively close. The apartment was nice and the rent was cheap. The grant I received made the exchange possible since it helped to cover for the living and travelling costs. Food is a bit more expensive on Åland Islands compared to mainland Finland.

I could borrow a bicycle from the hospital and that was very useful. I mainly moved around with the bike or by walking. I think it is quite easy to get around without a car although most locals use private cars as their transport mean.

In Åland Islands there are several outdoor and indoor sport activities that one can participate in. There are good places for hiking, running or walking as well as a very good swimming hall, Mariebad.

I already spoke swedish well when I arrived to Åland Islands but I had had a break in speaking swedish so it took a while to get back on track with the language. Once I just started speaking with clients and colleagues it did not take long to feel fluent in swedish again. I feel confident speaking swedish with my patients and I have expanded on my professional vocabulary in swedish. I am very glad for my improved language skills and I think it will benefit me in the future.

4. Good advice/suggestions for improvement

It is important to be open to new things and be active. A positive attitude takes one long way. In the internship you need to respect the culture in the working place but also it is good to discuss and have a dialogue about different ways of doing things. If you want to improve your swedish just try to start speaking it as much as you can from the first day on.

Find your way around the islands on your free time and meet locals if you can. In that way you can get so much more out of your exchange. I can recommend Mariehamns mödrarådgiving as an intership place.

Scope of report: Typed max. 2500 words

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