

Overseas stints boost learning experiences

Pioneer batch of NTU medical students completes studies

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Dr Ang Wee Kiat, 24, had a stint in Sri Lanka where he watched healthcare professionals maximise limited resources to serve a large community.

During another overseas stint, he also got the chance to observe how healthcare systems worked in Taiwan.

In India, Dr Aishwarya Narayanan, 23, saw children struggling with congenital diseases that would be normally detected earlier in Singapore.

Students have to do an overseas attachment as part of the programme at Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine.



(From left) Dr Ang Wee Kiat and Dr Aishwarya Narayanan.

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For Dr Ang, he did his six-week attachment in Taiwan and an additional stint in Sri Lanka.

At National University of Singapore (NUS), overseas electives are optional.

Today, the pioneer batch of 52 medicine students from NTU will have completed their five-year undergraduate course. They will then be posted out to hospitals. The batch officially graduates in July.

The overseas experiences are

what made Dr Ang choose to study medicine at NTU, because of the school's partnership with Imperial College London in 2010.

Dr Ang said: "I didn't go to London for my overseas stint in the end. But I did discover, in Sri Lanka, how they could use what limited resources they had to serve people. Sometimes a hospital would only have one surgeon.

"I realise the privilege we have back home with supervision and training. It was also eye-opening to see how different healthcare systems work."

Dr Aishwarya, who did her overseas stint at Christian Medical College in India, found similarities amid the differences in medical operations.

She said: "The medical practice is different everywhere, but the main person is always the patient, no matter where the

treatment is done."

Back in Singapore, both also went through NTU's team-based learning, a departure from the more traditional methods of teaching.

Instead of lectures, students viewed recorded clips and went through course materials ahead of class time on their mobile devices. They would then tackle a topical quiz, discuss with their team and present their solutions.

Dr Aishwarya said: "It helps

because sometimes when I have a question, I remember an argument I had with someone over that, rather than the answer from a textbook."

Dr Ang added: "It is very hands-on learning. There is also a lot of focus on communication. One of the issues we hear about is doctors treating patients as bed numbers, but here we learn to empathise with them."

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