RUTGERS HEALTH
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Travelogue: Emergency Medicine Rotation in Kobe, Japan

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Background

Japan
- Approximate total population of 124 million with 31.7% of the population aged 65+
- Life expectancy at birth: 84.5 years
- Current health expenditure (% of GDP): 10.82

Kobe
- Located in west-central Japan
- 8th largest city in Japan: population of 1,525,152
- Historical event: Great Hanshin earthquake of 1995

Japanese Emergency Medicine Healthcare System
- Organized in a three-tier system:
  - Primary care: private practices
  - Secondary care: general hospitals
  - Tertiary care: critical care centers
- An emergency call is typically triaged by paramedics who then transport the patient to either primary, secondary or tertiary emergency care center depending on acuity.

Clinical Sites
- Kobe University School of Medicine
  - ~500 medical students across 6 years
  - Publicly funded medical school
  - Contact Info: kkoryu@med.kobe-u.ac.jp
- Kobe University Hospital
  - Teaching hospital affiliated with Kobe University School of Medicine
- Kobe City Medical Center General Hospital
  - Located on Port Island
  - Sees high acuity patients
- Hyogo Emergency Medical Center
  - Dedicated trauma-only hospital receiving patients via ambulance only
- Konan City Medical Center
  - Sees moderate acuity patients

Program Overview

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Emergency Medicine at Kobe University Hospital (KUH)				
Kobe City Medical Center General Hospital	KUH: Emergency Medicine	Hyogo Emergency Medical Center	Konan City Medical Center General Hospital	KUH: Emergency Medicine

Daily Schedule:
- 8:30AM: Morning Rounds and Conference
- Observe patient care of trauma patients in the ED, CCU, ICU
- Occasional lectures with 5th year Kobe medical students:
  - Airway Management and Endotracheal Intubation Workshop
  - Nutrition in In-Patient Emergency Medicine
  - Organization of the Japanese Emergency Medical System
- 5:00PM: Afternoon Rounds and Conference

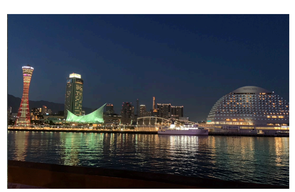
Exploring Kobe & Surrounding Cities

Highlights include:
- Enjoying local treats such as dango, kakigori, and okonomiyaki with the 5th year Kobe medical students in Kobe Sannomiya
- Learning traditional Japanese martial arts with the Aikido medical student club
- Visiting Osaka Museum of History and learning about the history of Osaka with my third-year Kobe medical student buddy, Azumi
- Exploring locations such as Mount Rokko, Kobe Harborland, Minatogawa-jinja Shrine
- Learning about local traditions and customs from Dr. Kotani and the medical students


5th Year Kobe Medical Students


Azumi and me


Aikido Club


Kobe Harborland

Goals

Work towards my professional goal of collaborating with local and global communities to improve access to healthcare by:
- Broadening my perspective of global healthcare
- Gaining an understanding of the Japanese healthcare system and approach to patient care
- Learning about emergency medicine in the global health context

Conclusion

- Gained an understanding of the similarities and differences between Japanese and American healthcare practices and systems
- Navigating a language barrier during my time abroad allowed me to better understand some of the challenges patients may face in America
- I look forward to applying lessons learned to my practice as a medical student and future physician.

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References

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