



Nepal Trip Report

by Jonathan Grossberg, MD

I recently completed a trip to Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH) hospital in Kathmandu this past April 2013. As stated in the reviews before, the program consists of two senior consultant/attendings (Dr Shilpakar and Dr Sharma), a junior attending (Dr. Gopal Sedain). In addition, there are 3 neurosurgical residents (Maya, Ali, and Amit) who have all completed standard Nepalese general surgery residencies (3 years) and are enrolled in a 3 year Neurosurgery residency.

The hospital is lucky for its large amount of pathology. In one clinic alone, I saw four large CPA masses, as well as many other interesting cases. Unfortunately, the team only has 2 OR days a week and often anesthesia will not let them start a 2nd case in the afternoon. As a result, many cases that are not urgent wait weeks (often in the hospital) for an OR slot. Many urgent/emergent cases (ventriculoperitoneal shunts, subdural hematoma evacuation, myelomeningocele repair, etc) are done on off hours due to lack of OR availability.

One of the interesting things about the hospital is that cases done on scheduled OR days are scrubbed by many people (multiple residents, attendings, etc), but cases done on off hours are done solely by residents. Occasionally the chief will come assist the 4th year resident, but it was not uncommon for the residents to be doing everything from complex myelomeningocele repairs to SDH evacuations to acute posterior fossa tumors alone at night. I found this to be one of the most beneficial parts of the experience, as I could come give tips and advice and be of use during the case.



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While working at TUTH, I took part in the daily schedule of events—clinic, conferences, teaching rounds, and OR. The residents are starving for resources and were ecstatic at being able to use my JNS and Neurosurgery logins while I was there. In addition, they requested lectures, so I gave 3 canned lectures that I had saved on dropbox. The hospital has a decent internet connection with a couple usable computers, so it was possible to log into resources with the residents at work.

In terms of logistics, I split my 2+ weeks between 2 accommodations (1 in the touristy thamel area recommended by Sushil because it is owned by a hospital ER doc and one a bit farther out in Boudhna). I either took the bus or a taxi to work every day depending on my schedule. If I were to do it again, I would look for a place within walking distance to be more available for night cases, since taxis disappear at night. The residents and attendings offered to show me around multiple times, and one light afternoon I spent the day with the chief resident seeing some sights.

I came away with a great deal of respect for the NS service at TUTH, as they are able to treat some very complex pathology with fairly limited resources. Although I felt more like an observer than a participant at times, I found my interactions with the residents in and out of the OR to be deeply rewarding.

