

Chemical Pathology in Cape Town - Chris Parker

For my elective I spent 4 weeks in the chemical pathology department of Tygerberg Hospital in Cape Town, South Africa. This is a large teaching hospital, with a very active chemical pathology department and as a result, I was able to have an overview of the laboratory and get involved with their research programme. This included preparing an ethics application, a short audit project, rotations in each of the different laboratory disciplines in the hospital, making several presentations to the laboratory staff and undertaking the laboratory management programme offered by the department. Outside the laboratory I joined the renal and endocrine ward rounds and attended the meetings held by these departments. The hospital takes a large number of medical elective students each year so I was able to stay at the elective lodge on the university campus which offered cheap and convenient accommodation.

The experience gave me a chance to see how a laboratory is managed in a different economic environment, serving a population with different healthcare requirements to those we have in the UK. I learnt a lot about patient care whilst on the ward rounds and about the practicalities of conducting laboratory audits which will be useful for my future career.