



## An Elective in Anaesthetics and Diving Medicine Auckland City Hospital, New Zealand

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My clinical placement began in the acute surgical operating rooms of Auckland City Hospital: New Zealand's largest public hospital as well as the largest clinical research facility.

Most days, I was allocated to a fast turnover theatre list and had plenty of opportunities practicing skills such as IV cannulation, induction of anaesthesia, intubation and bag mask ventilation. With senior guidance, I was able to practice securing an airway on several occasions; something I'd previously had no hands-on experience doing! Besides improving my practical skills, I gained valuable insight into how a clinical department effectively functions; weekly morbidity & mortality meetings, tutorials for junior doctors and audits of clinical practice were all things I observed and got involved with throughout my attachment. The anaesthetists I was working with were extremely approachable and enthusiastic about teaching! As a few of them also work in Intensive care, I was able to spend a few days in ITU. I attended ward rounds, assisted with arterial lines and even learned how to place a nasogastric tube; an entirely different experience to being in theatre!

Parallel to my clinical attachment, I was involved in a research project within the field of technical diving; a relatively recent and significant trend that employs the use of specialised techniques to explore deeper depths for longer durations than are possible with the single cylinder, open circuit air diving sets typically used by recreational divers. The project was entitled 'Repacking the carbon dioxide absorbent in a closed-circuit rebreather system used for technical diving: does it extend the life of the scrubber canister?' A laboratory study was undertaken to determine whether unpacking and repacking a CO<sub>2</sub> scrubber canister half way through its predicted life would result in prolongation of its CO<sub>2</sub> scrubbing efficacy. As part of my research, I visited the exercise neurometabolism laboratory where trials of the study took place. Observing the closed circuit rebreather in operation was fascinating and really improved my understanding of how it worked as part of a circuit.

I am appreciative of the AAGBI for their generous funding towards my elective, and to both Aberdeen and Auckland University, for helping me organise my placement. In particular, I would like to thank my host supervisor, Dr Simon Mitchell, for sharing his wealth of expertise in the field of diving medicine and anaesthesiology. His research and insight in the field of diving and hyperbaric medicine greatly assisted in the completion of my project. I am grateful for his enthusiasm and effort taken in arranging my clinical placement as well as encouraging me to experience the stunning and diverse natural beauty of New Zealand.

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