

CFHI Scholarship Report

CFHI Communicable Diseases in Mumbai, May 2010

Introduction

- Name: Emily Brown
- Program: Communicable Diseases, Mumbai, India
- Dates: May 2010



Overview of the program

I really enjoyed the Communicable Diseases program and it was especially interesting to see a different area of India after being in Delhi.

In terms of daily routine, we would generally be out from about 8:30 - 4, but this varied from day to day. In the 4th week we left at 9:30 for a clinic, got back at 2:30 and then went to another clinic from 6-9pm. Each morning we would meet Claver and then get transport to the site. We used buses and trains most of the time and I really enjoyed this! It took a while to get to grips with how both these transport systems worked but we got it mastered eventually!

We generally went to just 1 or 2 sites for the whole week. It was nice to spend a week at one place as it meant we got to know the place better and we were also able to follow the progression of some patients' care. We also spent 1 week in a village near Panvel. This was a nice contrast to Mumbai and it was much more rural and less hectic (but very, very hot!!).

In addition to the program, there was plenty of time for sightseeing in the evenings and weekend. The structure of the program gave an excellent balance between spending time at sites and having time to do touristy things and visit other areas of India. The first weekend I went to Karnala with Claver and his son and we climbed a hill there. The second weekend we visited the fishing village of Murud and the third weekend we went away to Khandala hill station.

Diary excerpts giving a sample of sites visited and what we experienced

Week 1

Tuesday 4th - Vimala Dermatological Centre, Versova

The Vimala Dermatological Centre was very nice! It has quite a large plot, with nice buildings and lovely plants. It's called the Vimala 'Dermatological' Centre but pretty much all its patients are leprosy patients, they just don't call it a leprosy centre to avoid stigma.

- Doctors round - when we arrived we were taken over to the female ward where the doctor was doing her round. The female and male rounds are done alternative days. She was a very nice doctor and very friendly towards us. A lot of the patients were there due to ulcers on the feet and hands.



Some of them had completed their course of treatment for leprosy but it hadn't completely gone yet. Others were there to take a course of leprosy treatment. Most patients stay a long time - a few months. There was another patient who was taking leprosy treatment but had had a reaction to it. There were adult and paediatric wards. A lot of the adults had large deformities e.g. very deformed feet with toes missing. They have walking difficulties and use a frame and special footwear. The paediatric cases didn't have deformities, I presume because the leprosy was being treated earlier.

- The centre provides all the care for free. It is funded by the government and run by catholic nuns. We saw the equivalent men's ward, where patients were in for similar things to the ladies. They have an operating theatre where they can operate on ulcers if they need an operation and they also do eye operations - many of the leprosy patients have eye problems. They have a physiotherapy room, where the patients come for a couple of hours a day. They do exercises for their deformities and walking/cycling. There is also a craft room where the patients make a variety of things which the centre then sells abroad e.g. clothes and cloth Christmas trees.



- We then went to the staff's quarters and we sat and had tea, biscuits and coconut cake with the sister, which was very nice!

Versova beach + lunch

From the centre we walked to Versova beach which is a fishy beach. It was really interesting. There were lots and lots of fishing boats and lots of people around working on the boats. Across from the beach there is an island with a fort, which is separated from the mainland by a small creek (malad creek) so there was a boat ferrying people to and from the island. It was interesting walking along the beach and there was a nice breeze. One of the ship owners was talking to Claver and asked if we could take a picture of his boat. He got the guys working on the boat to come and stand at the front of it and we took a picture. Claver took his number and said he would get the picture to him! We walked a long a bit around the headland. At the back of the beach there were loads and loads of fish hanging to dry. Not all the fish can be sold fresh so instead of wasting it they dry it and salt it to preserve it.

- Again to change the dressing and put on antibiotic cream. It looked very painful!
- A variety of children with fevers or vomiting, which he thought were viral infections. There was also a young girl with vomiting and stomach pain which indicated that she had worms, so he gave her an anti sickness and anti parasitic.
- A young women who had a fever and had missed her last period, so he thought she might be pregnant and asked for a urine sample.
- An older lady with severe headache for quite a while and tingling over her body. He thought it was a problem with her brain and referred her to a hospital for a CT scan and a paranodial sinus xray.



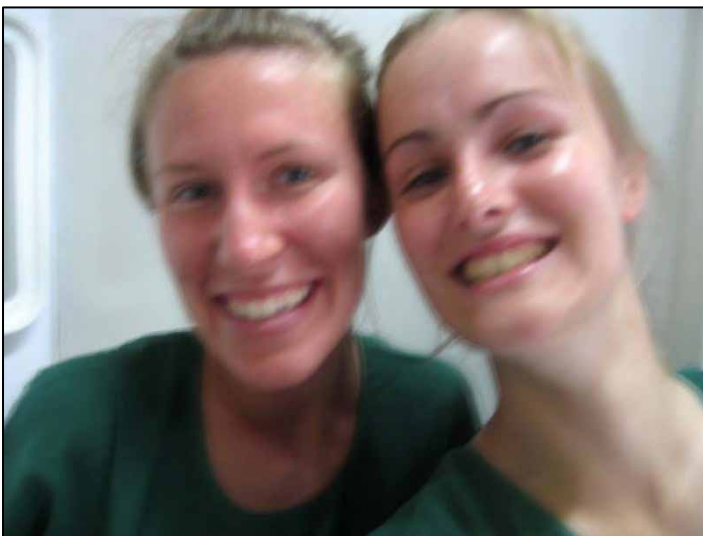
Dr Potnis' clinic

- We went to Dr Potnis' clinic for 3 hours each afternoon this week. Dr Potnis' clinic is a private clinic in a slum like area. It has a small waiting area and then the doctor's room. You have to take your shoes off and leave them at the front.
- Dr Potnis was a really nice man, very friendly and chatty and a very good teacher. We saw a lot of interesting cases in the clinic and Dr Potnis explained all of them well. He also involved us e.g. we could take blood pressure and listen to breathing etc.
- Examples of cases: A young man with a crush injury to his finger. The finger and bone was still intact but the flesh was damaged and there was quite a lot of loose skin. The doctor had seen him the day before so was seeing him wanted to eat lots of mangoes!
- A teenage girl with a middle ear infection - there was lots of pus and so he put some hydrogen peroxide in the ear and cleaned with cotton wool.

Week 2

BSES hospital

We spent the week at BSES hospital in Andheri. It was a very interesting week. We spent a lot of time in surgery a saw a variety of operation - removal of a neck + tongue cancer and reconstruction of the jaw, caesarean, removal of ovaries, removal of nasal polyps, hernia repair, repairable of cleft pallet. We also spent a few mornings in the outpatients department. Generally all the doctors we were with were very friendly and explained things well to us, especially the surgeons.



Week 3

Panvel

The place we stayed at was called Kushta Rog Nivaran Samiti and is a complex with lots of different projects. There are about 700 residents and then other people who come for things for short term

- Naturopathy centre - The centre has a treatment area offering different things e.g. massage, enema, cold baths, steam bath, acupuncture etc. People come for about 10 days to cure whatever problem they have using naturopathic methods. There are 3 levels of accommodation - deluxe, special and general
- Leprosy hospital + leprosy colony - There is a hospital for leprosy patients with a male and female ward. Around the hospital there is a whole colony of people living - they are cured lepers who are allowed to stay here. They work on the agriculture or tailoring room. In return they get their house and their food. They all eat together in a canteen place and they do prayers there and having meetings etc
- Shop - There is a grocery store on site for anyone here. We went in briefly - it sells biscuits, some veg, nuts, soap etc
- Rural village education centre - This is a very nice centre where men and women come from village for general education training sessions. There is a large auditorium, a conference room, dining room and male and female dormitories.
- Senior citizens home - This is a home for the elderly, but elderly who are still completely independent but just want someone nice and relaxing to come and live. There are 2 person rooms and they get their food provided and have a daily routine. One of the old men living there came and spoke to us in very good English and told us about the place and the daily



routine. He said the place was perfect and he had no complaints. The place's name means peace garden. We told us his routine: up at 6:15, tea, then yoga, bath, breakfast, lunch at 12:30, tea and 2 biscuits at 4, dinner at 8pm. The place had a really nice feel to it and it's a very nice place to be when you get older as opposed to the craziness of Mumbai. It is also the first place I've seen in India for looking after the elderly

- Dependents home - This home is run by a charity that 2 parents set up in memory of their twin children who both died in their 20's of cancer. It is a home for the dependent - elderly people with illnesses e.g. with Alzheimer's, amputees, or just old people. It houses 64 people. We met a lady who worked there who was very friendly and told us about the place and then kept wishing us all the best.
- Cow shed - On the way back we popped into the cow shed. They have 2 cow sheds and get milk from the cows. The cows have fans in the shed!
- Agriculture - The site is big and has quite a few acres. They grow a lot of produce e.g. vegetables, rice, mangos



Tuesday 18th - Dermatology clinic

We stayed in Panvel for 3 nights. Each day we spent the morning at a different clinic in Panvel and the afternoon back at the village. On Tuesday a jeep picked us up at 8:30 and we drove into Panvel. We went to a private dermatology clinic. It was run by one main doctor but he had 3 other doctors who also worked there. It was a really nice place. The doctor was also very nice and a very good teacher. He said that because they only usually have about 6 minutes, one of the other doctors was going to come in and help him do prescriptions, writing notes etc so he could



talk through each case with us, so that was nice. He saw quite a few patients - fungal infections, vertigo, burns, herpes simplex. Then he said there were few enough patients for him to have the time to show us photos of lots of different dermatology cases. There were a lot of photos and so many different cases! It was interesting though.

Week 4

- This week we spent from 11 - 2 at Dr Mhatre's clinic and 6-9 at Dr Bathla's clinic

Monday 24th - Dr Bathla's Clinic, Kalina

We walked to the clinic from the hostel, which was nice. The clinic was very nice inside, a waiting area and then a nice consulting room. The doctor was very friendly and chatty and explained everything. Most of the consultations were in English as well which was great. It meant we didn't have to wait for interpretation but we could also think about/learn from the way the doctor was asking questions and what he was asking. He was so socialable with all his patients! He knew loads of them and there was lots of time for chit chat! It was a very different class of patients to Dr Potnis' clinic which was in a semi slum area. They were much more affluent, hence that most spoke English.



- We saw a variety of patients. A pregnant lady who had been using infertility treatment and needed HCG and progesterone injections to maintain her pregnancy. A lady who wanted a chicken pox vaccination after coming into contact with a child with it but she'd never had it herself. A lady who had been feeling nauseous for a while - he thought she might be pregnant. 2 guys with fevers - they both were and had blood tests done. The blood test get



done at a lab near the clinic and then results came within an hour! So the doctor was able to tell the patients the results and change their medication if required e.g. he thought probably a bacterial infection for one guy but wanted to confirm with a blood test (e.g. high neutrophils) but if it had come back as malaria positive he would have altered the medication he had given him. A giggly teenage girl and her friend who wanted her nose pierced. A lady who needed an ECG - they don't use stickers - the arm and leg points have clamped and the chest points use balloons to suction the metal discs to the skin!

Tuesday 25th - Dr Mhatre's clinic, slum-like area, Wadala

- When we got to the clinic it was shut! Claver rang to find out if the doctor was coming. Then someone came and opened it up and we waited inside. After about 10 mins Dr Mhatre did arrive, hot and out of breath and apologised lots for being late! He seemed nice, chatty etc. He wasn't enjoying the heat though!
- The clinic was good this morning. He didn't have loads of patients but he had a video camera which he had recorded about 20 interesting cases on so we looked through that and he talked us through each case.

