

Kourtney Hall, OSU, Center for Social Medicine Summer 2012 Final report

1. What are your initial impressions of the organization and an overview and thoughts about the kind of work you've started doing; how does the work match your expectations, how does it match your goals?

Center for social medicine seems like a great organization that has its hands in many different projects, working with a variety of people. As far as the program goes sometimes it seems as if they are not completely sure what they want to do with us. I'm sure this is a combination of this being a very new program as well as the number of interns that they have here right now. Since the beginning they have been getting better and they are listening to us so that they can do their best to accommodate all of our needs, they do this by asking for our feedback on each program and having us fill out weekly reports that include our comments and concerns about the current program.

During the first week we had an introduction to Loni and the Pravara model of education. We were taken to all of the schools and the sugar factory. It was great to hear the history of Pravara, especially because the history is so important to all the people here. I also really enjoyed visiting the public schools and a few of the other types of schools they have here, however it was a lot to spend three days visiting schools.

During the second week we went to Nashik and learned about the MUKTA project including the work they do with female sex workers (FSW), men seeking men (MSMs), and migrant workers. This was a really eye opening experience and it made a huge impact on me. I never thought I would be in a situation where I would meet FSW and I definitely never expected to be brought to the brothels where they work. It was really hard to be there, especially with all the men staring at us but I left there with many new things to think about and it really made me think about how people are sometimes placed in situations they would never choose for themselves out as a means to meet basic human needs.

We also just finished a week of visiting rural health clinics and doing two days in the mobile clinic. I have really enjoyed it because I have finally started doing what I came here to do. I have had the opportunity to watch several antenatal care patients. They have been slowly showing me the different parts of a visit with the pregnant women. I have also had the opportunity to observe the checkups of several babies. I am hoping that in the next couple of weeks I will have the opportunity to watch some babies being delivered. Overall I am pleased at what I have done so far and I am looking forward to learning more and having the opportunity to see more things in other areas of the medical field

2. What stood out to you the most regarding your arrival?

The thing that stood out to me the most when I arrived was the amount of trash everywhere. I don't think I have ever realized how clean it is in Oregon until I came here. I am actually having a relatively hard time because I am always very conscious of recycling back home, but here people seem to just throw their garbage on the side of the roads. I constantly see animals wading through the garbage and

sometimes even eating it. Now that I have been here for a while I am almost getting used to it, but today during lunch the doctor just rolled up her newspaper and threw it down a hill on the side of a temple and expected me to do the same with mine, while doing it I felt as if I was disrespecting the temple.

After spending three months in India I became more accustomed to the trash and began to realize that it is going to remain this way for a while. They just do not have the infrastructure to dispose of their trash properly. I also learned, from a book I read, that in some cases the collecting and sorting trash is a source of income for some of the slum dwellers.

3. What was your greatest anxiety prior to departing and how do you feel about that now that you have arrived?

My greatest anxiety was riding in cars and crossing streets. In the past I have been very accident prone, so I am a very nervous passenger at home. I had heard and seen videos of the driving here and it really made me nervous that I was going to be constantly scared to ride in a car. I know this is much different than a lot of other people's fears about going to a different country, but it really made me nervous to think that I would be riding around in cars that are constantly driving toward each other and don't really seem to be following any kind of rules.

Now that I have been here for a while I have really gotten used to the driving and it is actually way better than I had expected. Although cars do drive toward each other at times, I feel much more at ease because it seems as if they have some kind of language and that the people that are driving really know what they are doing. I haven't seen a single accident since I have been here, which has really helped too.

4. How are things going at work now that you have settled in for a bit? How does this align with your professional goals that you set for yourself? What would you like to achieve in the next half of your internship?

Now that I have completed my first week working with the doctors at the rural clinic and at the mobile clinic I have had my first opportunity to observe doctors and how they interact with their patients. They have shown me how they carry out basic procedures such as measuring the height of a fetus during antenatal visits, knowing what things need to be checked at different stages in the pregnancy, listening to the fetal heart sounds using the monitor, taking blood pressure, writing up a referral, and doing a well child visit. These are all very basic things that the doctors do daily in these rural settings to care for women and children who are their main patients. I have also seen many elderly patients complaining of pains and arthritis. The biggest difficulty with this is that I cannot communicate with the patients using words and I cannot understand what they are talking to the doctors about. Although, I have gotten better at reading body language and nonverbal communication that is taking place between the patients and the doctor.

One of my main goals is to learn about all aspects of midwifery, nursing, and gynecology. The most important way to do this is to observe people in these professions during their daily tasks. This week was an excellent introduction into the care a women's needs before delivery as well as the needs of the children, including how their growth is comparing to other children their age, after birth, and until the

age of 5. I am very pleased with how well this week has allowed me to meet many of these professional goals. I have also been going to the library in the evenings to read articles about nurses and midwives. Reading about things that are important in these fields right now and about the new research that is being done has proven to be an excellent way to supplement the things that I am learning through the visits with the doctors.

For the remainder of the internship I really hope to spend time in the nursing hospital. I would like to have the opportunity to talk with the current midwives in India and to the nurse midwife students to learn what their days are like and what their workload is here. I would also like to have the opportunity to observe them with patients. In addition I would like to spend time in the gynecology department, observe a cesarean delivery, work with the doctors in the labor ward, and pediatrics. I would like to observe the differences that these professionals have so that I can compare them with my expectations of being a midwife and how that would compare with being a gynecologist or a general medicine doctor. I am also interested to see how these compare with the practices in the US.

My other goal is to spend some time in at least three other departments in the hospital. I would like to have a wider range of experience here and see what other doctors do in different specialties. During August I hope to be able to spend time in surgery, oncology, orthopedics, and emergency. I will be happy with any combinations of these and I look forward to discussing with Dr. Sunil about my interests to see what will be possible during that month.

5. How are things going relative to your personal goals? In which areas have you made progress and where do you still have some room to expand? What do you want to make sure you address before you leave?

When I came here my main personal goals included figuring out the things that are important to me (my priorities in life and how my priorities are comparing to the way that I live my life), take time to breathe and not constantly rush through everything that I am doing, and form new relationships both with the other interns and with the people in India.

I am very used to constantly being on the go and doing many things at once, so being here where I have a lot to do during the day but a lot of downtime at night has been very different for me. I have had a lot of time to think and I have started writing a journal for myself that is a combination of my experiences here as well as the thoughts I have had regarding how I have felt about what I have done and about how I feel being here. Doing this has been a great way to calm down at night and to review the things that I have done during the day. It has also given me a way to look at the things I have accomplished in that day.

Through observation of the culture here I have noticed that, although people work hard throughout the day, they also take breaks to relax. In the past couple years I have never regularly taken time to relax and this has made me realize that relaxing is one thing that I need to do everyday otherwise I will start to feel burnout with things. Even if it is something that has to be scheduled in, like it is here for some people, it is something that will help me out in the long run.

Before I leave I would like to continue making friends here that can teach me about the cultures and also make friends with the other interns that are all very similar to me but also very different. I am not completely sure if my personal goals are usual for a student interning abroad, but Stephen said something to me in the first couple days here that made me realize they were important goals to have

for myself. We were all talking about how we have more time than usual and trying to figure out ways to fill this time in the evenings that is productive and he told me that one thing that was said to him was that it was also important to remember to take care of yourself while you are here too and if that means staying in your room for a little while that is okay. After hearing this I realized how I have programmed myself to find something to fill every second of my day for a really long time and that, since I have the opportunity now, I need to also have a little time where I don't have more to do than sit alone and reflect on things. I think this will help me to learn a lot more about myself.

6. How are things going relative to your cross-cultural goals? What kinds of experiences have stood out to you so far? What do you want to ensure to experience before you leave?

Accomplishing my cross cultural goals is going really well. When coming here it was really important to me to learn how to communicate well with the Indian people and to learn and adopt aspects of their culture (especially while I am here). When I first arrived I had this feeling that I was never going to be able to talk to or understand anyone that was talking to me. This was mostly because, although the person who picked us up at the airport spoke and understood English, I could not understand anything that he said. With the combination of his accent and the differences in our types of English it was really hard to communicate. After talking to several other people I realized that it is just a matter of slowing down and actively listening and understanding what they are saying.

After this I was determined to work harder to be able to understand people and to adjust the way that I talk so that they can better understand me. Now I can have a full conversation with the person who picked us up at the airport. This difference in our communication shows that I have come a long way since I first got here, when I could hardly understand a full sentence that he said to me.

My other goal was to learn about their culture and adopt certain aspects of it. I have been doing this both through conversations with the people here and by reading books. Instead of reading the books I would normally read at home, I went to a bookstore here and bought a couple books either written by Indian writers or about the Indian culture. I have finished two so far and I feel like I have learned a lot by doing this while also living in this culture at the same time. The other thing that I am doing is asking people when I am curious about anything that seems unusual to me. So far I have gotten all my questions answered and in the process I have learned a lot about the Indian culture. I am doing my best to do things according to their customs (like not using my left hand for eating). We have also visited a few temples and I have learned a lot about the various religions here.

Before I leave I would really like to see, or at least see pictures, of a traditional Indian wedding. There are many differences in the marriages here and I am still trying to understand the differences and how they have come to be this way. I'm sure the ceremony itself also has very different elements to it and I would like to know what they are.

7. Describe a day in your life – what is your work schedule like, what do you do after work, how do

you balance your time between work and exploring life outside of work?

I usually wake up every morning at 6:30 and if I have time I will spend 10 or 20 minutes skyping with different members of my family (this is usually every other day). Around 7:00 I workout for about an hour with two of the other interns, we usually finish around 8:00. I spend 30 minutes getting ready then I head to breakfast with the other interns (I eat breakfast in the mess 3 days a week and eat oatmeal in my room the other days).

After breakfast I will either head to CSM or to where I am posted for the day, depending on what is scheduled for us.

So far we have spent a week being introduced to Loni, which involved visits to the schools and the sugar factory; Week 2 we went to Nashik where we learned about different NGOs, specifically those working with individuals at increased risk for HIV/STIs; week 3 and 4 we were posted in 3 different rural clinics for two days each, as well as the mobile clinic for two days and we spent one day visiting villages; week 5 we spent the beginning of the week preparing for workshops we were to give to two schools on the subject of health promotion.

Usually our work day is from 9-5 with about an hour for lunch. On Saturdays we have a half day and Sunday is a day off.

After 5 I usually go to the market to buy water or anything else that I need, go to tea with the other interns, and read until 8:00 when we go to dinner. After dinner I sometimes skype with my family and I try to spend at least an hour studying for the GREs, reading journal articles, or spending time with the other interns. I usually go to bed around 11:00.

8. Housing: What is your living situation like?

I am housed in the international hostel at Pravara Medical Trust. The hostel is much nicer than I was expecting; I have two twin beds that are pushed together and they are reasonably comfortable. I also have a TV, two closets, desk, mini fridge, teapot, air conditioning, and a bathroom to myself.

Overall, I would say that I am extremely comfortable where I am staying. The only things that are different than being at home is that I do not have a stove or anything to cook with (but we have the mess where we eat so it hasn't been a problem) and washing my clothes by hand, which is the way laundry is done here so I expected this.

9. Finances: How is your budget working out for you? Are you spending more or less than what you expected? How much do you typically spend on food, recreation, travel, etc? What would you do differently knowing what you know now?

Coming here I budgeted \$1000 for the entire time I was here. So far I have spent about \$500, which is a little bit more than I had expected, but if I leave here having spent \$1500 I will still be reasonably within my budget with just a little more than I had originally planned. Here is a breakdown of what I spent my

money on since I have been here:

Weekly:

Eat at canteen every Sunday: 100 RS

Water: 200RS

Snacks: 200- 300 RS

Travel:

Trip to goa: 8,740 RS (includes plane and hotel)

Car to Shirdi: 286 RS per person

Car to Ajanta and Elora caves: 570 RS per person

Recreation:

Entrance fee for Ajanta and Elora: 500 RS

Sula Vineyard: 1,000 RS

Merchandise:

Clothes: 6,500

Nashik mall: 4,000 RS (books, blanket, towels, etc)

There are certain things that I have spent a little more money on than what I may have thought originally, but I think I would spend my money the same way if I were to do it again. I really wanted to buy traditional Indian clothing, both because it is more comfortable to wear here and I feel as if I fit in better. The clothes were one of my major purchases, but I am glad that I have purchased them because they are getting a lot of use. The rest of my money that I have budgeted for this trip will go toward the 9 days of traveling that I will do at the end.

10. Travel and Transportation: How do you typically get around town and to work? Are you satisfied with that choice? Would you recommend other options? Do you have time to explore the surrounding area on time off? How do you manage that? What do you recommend for travel options? Where do you recommend exploring?

Any traveling that is related to work has prearranged transportation. When going anywhere in town we typically walk because everything is nearby. We have traveled twice on the weekends and to do this we asked CSM to hire us a car and then we pay the driver at the end of the trip. We will also be taking a plane to Goa in two week, which will require a car to take us to Mumbai and to pick us up at the end. Overall, it has been really simple to arrange transportation when traveling and there is always someone at CSM willing to help us out.

On the weekends we have done some exploring and the places we have gone include: Shirdi (to see Sai Baba temple), Ajanta and Elora caves, and the temples in Loni. We also had the opportunity to go to a vineyard while we were in Nashik and it was a very nice place to visit. Out of all the places we went the

only place I would recommend not going would be Shirdi, it was just too crowded and hard to get around.

11. How well did your coursework prepare you for your internship? What knowledge of your field has been most important so far?

The coursework that prepared me the most for this internship was anatomy, nutrition through the lifecycle, and developmental psychology. The second two were most helpful when I was in maternity.

I have spent a lot of time reading books and research articles related to maternity and midwifery. This has really helped me during my time in maternity and gynecology. It helps that I get really excited about it too, so I absorb the information in this field really well.

Another important thing that I have told a lot of the residence and interns here is that, although I am not a medical student, during our undergrad we are required to take all of the same classes that they take in their first and second year.

12. Cross Cultural: Describe an event where you misunderstood something due to cultural differences. What did you do? What would you do next time?

So far, I haven't had as much problems understanding things as I have had problems being misunderstood. One difference between my culture and the Indian culture is that sarcasm does not translate well, especially with people who speak English as a second or a third language. I knew this before coming, so I did my best to consciously stop saying sarcastic things even before I came. I was doing really well until one evening, while in Nashik.

On this evening we went to the mall and we were accompanied by Hashesh. We just met him the day before, but he was one of the people that worked with the Mukta project and we were told that we should not go anywhere alone and he agreed to be our chaperone that night. While at the mall we had dinner at the food court, after eating he seemed ready to go but we decided to get ice cream. It was kind of taking a long time, so I jokingly said to Hashesh "don't worry we are never actually going to leave this mall." He asked me what I said so I repeated myself and when he still didn't understand I said "never mind" thinking that it would be easier than explaining myself. After getting my ice cream we noticed Hashesh sitting at a different table, but he was on the phone so we thought he wanted privacy. After hanging up he stayed there so one of the girls asked him if he didn't like us anymore. He said that I had asked him to leave us alone because we wanted our privacy.

I felt so bad that was what he understood from what I said. He was so nice, walking around the mall with five girls when he probably had better things to do. I was just trying to joke around with him, but it didn't turn out the way I had intended. When we heard what he said I just kept telling him how embarrassed I was and that I didn't mean that at all. The other interns helped out really well with the situation by telling him that they don't understand me half the time either. After sitting through a very

embarrassing 15 minutes I apologized to him in private for the misunderstanding. Since then I have done a really good job of thinking before I speak.

13. Personal: What are the most important things you have learned about yourself thus far through this experience?

I've learned that I am really good at adapting to new and challenging situations. I thought it was going to take me a while to adapt to living in India and working with the people here, but I was able to jump right in and get started right when I got here. I have also learned that it is ok to slow down and work on one thing at a time. Until this summer, I have always been busy doing too many things at once, but being here has given me the opportunity to really focus on this internship and nothing else.

The last thing I learned about myself is that I would like to work on my ability to talk to others. While with the other interns, I have noticed that they are really good at initiating conversations and keeping them going with questions. I always thought that I had this trait, but being here I realize that I have a really hard time initiating a conversation. Once someone has begun speaking to me I really enjoy talking with them. I have been trying to work on this skill in the past few weeks, but I still need a lot of work on it.

14. Professional: With your experience thus far, are you more or less committed to a career in this field? What experiences have contributed to this?

After my experiences in India I am more committed to a career in midwifery. One thing that has changed is that instead of pursuing a degree in nurse midwifery alone, I now plan to get a double masters degree as a nurse practitioner/ nurse midwife. I decided to do this because I was very inspired by visiting family medicine for the day. I enjoyed the variety of patients that Dr. Linge saw and I also enjoyed the aspect of having patients at all stages in life. My primary passion is still pregnancy and child birth, and it has only been increased by my time spent in maternity, but I am very excited to have had the opportunity to expand my scope to have a more diverse set of interests.

While in maternity I had the opportunity to clarify that being a midwife is truly my passion and I am excited to experience maternal and child care at a more personal level than what is practiced here, in India, to have a much deeper and more important relationship with the women that I will be working with.

15. Cross Cultural: Looking back at your pre-departure journal or notes, how have your impressions of the host culture changed? What new sources of information have shaped your perspectives?

Before I came here I was under the impression that nobody talked to anyone outside of their caste, I would predominately be surrounded by poverty, most people suffering from malnutrition, it is a very family centered culture, and the group was valued over the individual. Overall my direct knowledge of India was very limited and I was not completely sure what to expect except that I would be in a world

very different than what I am used to.

Now that I have spent the last three months here, getting to know people and learning more about the culture, my impressions of India have drastically changed. I have learned that people here truly care about the well being of others and although there are different castes that do play a huge role in the way people interact with each other, there is still communication and friendship between castes.

I have also learned about the large divide between the rich and the poor in India. In rural Loni we see men, women, and children suffering from poverty and malnutrition and we also see well off doctors and medical students. During my observations in one of the rural health clinics we saw a severely anemic woman who was also suffering from many other problems because of her anemia. This is common in Loni, but there are rural health clinics, the mobile clinic, Pravara Medical Trust, and vaccination camps throughout Loni which are all targeted at educating families to decrease the cases of malnutrition. In the schools they even give children supplemental nutrition packages to take home to their families, which are provided by the government. For many people malnutrition is a result of nutrition illiteracy and it is also due to poverty. Through the SIDA project the doctors and community members are working to decrease nutrition related medical problems and to increase job opportunities through things like spirulina production in the farms and IT centers in the villages.

In addition to these things, I have also learned a lot about the joint family system, here in India. I knew that arranged marriages were a common practice in India and I quickly learned that it is common practice for women to move in with their husband's family. This seemed very strange to me, so I asked many questions to learn more about it. In many families this is how things worked, but I also learned that it is not always the case. In some families the husband may move for work while his wife remains with his parents. It is great to see how important family is to everyone here and how much people enjoy talking about their family, but it is still unusual to me that living on your own is more of an exception than the rule.

Overall, I have come to appreciate the things that make India different than the US. The people I have met have all been very friendly.

16. Personal: What has been the greatest challenge personally thus far on this internship? What has been the greatest reward?

The greatest challenge I have had thus far has been learning to communicate well with others. This is something that I had to work at everyday and, although I got better, it is still something that always takes more effort than what I was used to in the US. At the same time, this has also been greatly rewarding because I have become so much better than when I first arrived in India. I know how to ask for things, not to use sarcasm, what common US words to replace with better understood Indian words, and how to slow down my speech to listen to others better. I have also learned how to really pay attention and understand what people say despite the different accents they have here.

The greatest reward has been learning that I am good at adapting to new and different situations. It did

not take me long, at all, to adjust to the different lifestyle and customs in India. I haven't been homesick since I got here either, which is surprising. Since I haven't done any previous traveling I was unsure of how I would adjust to so many new changes. I have learned that I really enjoy the challenge of embracing a new culture and I am excited to experience new cultures in the future. The other great reward I have had is learning that I will be comfortable and thrive in a career as a midwife. Being posted in maternity solidified my desire to work as a midwife and I am thrilled that I truly know that it is what I want to do.

17. Identify 3-4 accomplishments or successes in your internship of which you are most proud. These can be professional, personal, or cross-cultural. Explain briefly below.

Learning how to communicate well with the doctors and interns despite the language barriers

Planning and implementing a workshop

Learning that I am choosing a career path that I am excited about and that I am prepared and capable of doing it, with the proper training

18. After identifying 3-4, pick two of these and expand on them with the following:

- * **outline the context of the situation**
- * **Describe any challenges you faced**
- * **Describe the actions you took to overcome the challenges**

Restate what the final outcome was (your accomplishment you mentioned above)

• In the third week of our internship, our program was changed and we were given a week to prepare a workshop to present to two of the schools, the topic of our workshop was 'health promoting schools.' With very little direction we were told to get started and that we could go and meet the principals of each school the following day. I was terrified because I had never prepared a workshop before and I realized that there is a certain degree of variation between the way health is taught in the US and the way it is taught in India.

After talking with the principals we learned that health is a subject that is not available in their schools, so despite presenting our workshop to the older students they still lacked a lot of what we would consider basic health knowledge. With this in mind, we decided we would each take a health topic that interested us and find a creative way to present it. Before realizing there was a better way to approach this, I prepared my entire portion of the workshop. We soon learned that we needed to completely redo it to be more interactive and less like a presentation.

My biggest challenge was figuring out what it actually meant to give a workshop and to be able to understand what information the participants are expected to get out of it. Despite being really unsure about how to do a workshop I tried to work really closely with the interns who had previous experience giving presentations. I figured that the best way to learn how to do it would be to work near them so

that I could see what they are doing, ask for their suggestions, and ask any other questions. The whole process was really hard for me to figure out, but once I got going I was very thrilled with the results of the workshop.

In the end I worked well with our six person team to create a workshop on 'health promoting schools.' My primary focus was on nutrition, but I also helped out with a few of the other topics. In addition, I also feel confident in my ability to plan workshops in the future.

- Before beginning my internship with the Center for Social Medicine my interest within the medical field has varied a lot. I have always known that I wanted to work within medicine in some capacity but I have switched between wanting to be an osteopathic family physician to an obstetrician/ gynecologist and finally to being a Nurse Midwife.

One of my goals while in India was to determine if becoming a nurse midwife was truly the career that I want to pursue. In the process of determining this I had the opportunity to visit many different departments within the hospital. This inevitably gave me the opportunity to see many departments that interested me and many that I could never see myself working in. But, at the end of the day, I was always the most drawn to maternity while I was there despite the difficulty in observing in maternity because of the sheer number of patients.

While observing in the maternity department it was very hard for me to see how little the patients were cared for during their labor and delivery process and how they lost all sense of humanity and individuality to the doctors. It also made me realize how different being pregnant and delivering a baby in rural India is from being pregnant and delivering a baby in the United States. Seeing this was my biggest challenge in discovering that I definitely want to become a midwife while at the same time it was a huge part of the final discovery. I realized that by becoming a midwife I will be able to have the best patient centered care and really get to know my patients, which is in direct contrast with the way pregnancy and delivery is treated in rural India.

The best part about being able to observe in maternity for so long was realizing that delivering babies is something that I can see myself doing. Before coming to India this was my biggest doubt because I realized that the reality of being a midwife might not match with the ideas in my head and because of that I may not be able to physically and emotionally pull off this career.

At the completion of this internship one of my biggest accomplishments was realizing that I truly want to be a midwife and that once I have completed the required education I will easily become confident in my ability to deliver babies and give care to women and their children.

19. Describe the workplace culture at your host organization. How does your personal cultural lens work within the culture of your host organization?

The workplace culture in India was a lot more relaxed and laid back compared to what I have been used

to in the United States. At first it was really hard for me to understand why the doctors in the rural clinic felt it was necessary to take a nap during their off time between patients and why they weren't trying to get more work done during that time. For me this was just so unusual. However, toward the end of my internship I started to understand it a lot more. Especially within the Rural Health Clinics there is just a lot less to do and it is a lot of unnecessary stress to force one's self to work hard finding things to do when there just isn't the need. This was not true in all the departments, but it was not an unusual finding.

I also noticed that there were a lot more people working in different places because of the way they split up the each job description. It was really interesting to me that everywhere we went there were people that are hired as the help or something of that sort. In addition to making sure things are tidy this person did a lot of tasks that seemed very minimal to me. For instance, when a visitor pays someone a visit, instead of that person grabbing them a chair from a nearby room they will call their help to do it for them. This was hard for me because there were a lot of times that I didn't understand why they would call someone to do a task that I was perfectly capable of doing myself. In the end I also grew to appreciate this within their culture because it meant that there was even more people with jobs that might not have them if this was not the cultural norm.

20. What words of advice do you have for future interns as they prepare for this internship and living in your host country/culture?

For the internship itself: Keep a journal of the things that you are doing each day or each week. It is a great way to reflect on the experience and to be really present in your internship and the things that you are doing.

Realize that they are not going to send you into the hospital the very first day. It may seem like things are going at a slower pace than what you would like at first, but it is important to not let this upset or discourage you. It is a part of the culture and when you look back at the things you have done you will be blown away with how much you have accomplished in a short time. It is important to look at the big picture and realize that each new thing you are doing is an important part of the internship that may teach you more than you initially expected.

When doing observations in the hospitals it is important to just talk to the doctors. Sometimes it seems as if they don't want to talk to you, but as one intern told me: A lot of the times they are just really shy and nervous too talk to you.

For packing: You don't really need to buy shampoo and conditioner or other shower supplies because it is all available in one of the shops across from campus. Although you should bring travel toiletries for the first couple of days as well as any feminine hygiene products you need.

It is a good idea to bring one long sleeve shirt, although it is really hot it is nice to have one for the evenings when you are going to dinner. Also it is really important to bring a good pair of sandals. They wear sandals in the hospitals and it is also nice to wear them because you have to take your shoes off to

go into some places.

You don't need as much bug spray and sunscreen as you think. I brought two huge bottles of each and I didn't even come close to finishing one. It is the same for hand sanitizer, two small travel bottles is plenty.

Bring at least a 1 liter water bottle

For traveling: Try to take at least one train, it is a great experience.

Talk with the interns and doctors for the places they recommend traveling to; they may have ideas you have never thought of.

Go to the Ellora and Ajanta caves one weekend. If you ask the CSM staff they will get you a driver to take you there. It is absolutely beautiful and worth the long trip in the car to see.

If possible, wait to book your flight home. 3 out of the 6 of the interns I was with ended up paying extra to rebook our flights so that we could all travel together afterwards. Also we chose to fly into Mumbai and out from New Delhi which was a lot more convenient for traveling.

Bring at least 4 copies of your visa and passport, you need them for lots of things.