

Voice of the International Students

VIS

医学研究院
国際連携部門だより

(July 2025
Vol.38)

What is VIS ?

The International Relations Division of the Faculty of Medicine issues VIS to send out the live messages from International Students of Graduate School of Medicine, Graduate School of Biomedical Science and School of Medicine, and to promote the exchange of intercultural information. We hope VIS helps to cultivate intercultural communications and boost international exchanges.

VISの発行の目的は、医学院・医理工学院・医学部医学科の留学生の生の声を発信することと、異文化間の情報交換を促進することです。VISが異文化間のコミュニケーションを養い、国際交流を実行していくうえで役立つことを望みます。

WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

From University of Auckland, New Zealand

I spent eight fulfilling weeks in Hokkaido University. Growing up part Japanese yet having only spent two weeks in the country meant living and studying in Japan was my dream. This opportunity to spend a prolonged time in a town and university with barely any non-Japanese allowed me to fully experience this different culture, environment, and language. In doing so, alongside my clinical experience, I gained a whole new insight into the complexities of cultural differences and language barriers and how this plays out within a clinical and learning experience. I split my elective into 5 weeks in Forensics Pathology and 3 weeks in Emergency Medicine. In Forensics Pathology, I gained so much new knowledge in a previously exposed field, and the team welcomed me wholeheartedly. In emergency medicine, I experienced the high quality critical care medicine within a highly skilled team and was able to compare both the obvious and more subtle differences between clinical care in Japan and New Zealand. My experiences differed greatly between the two placements, which provided me with a diverse and impacting experience. On the whole, my elective allowed me to widen my clinical knowledge and skills and gain new insights into a vastly different culture, environment, and society. I deeply thank the two departments I joined and the International Relations Division for giving me this opportunity.



Lisa Rose Smith

Department of Forensic Medicine
Department of Acute and Critical Care Medicine (Emergency Med.)
Period: April 7 - May 30, 2025

WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

From Taipei Medical University, Taiwan



CHEN, LING-YA

Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Period: May 12 - May 30, 2025

I am truly honored to have had the opportunity to complete a three-week clinical observership in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Hokkaido University Hospital. The department's structure—separating obstetrics and gynecology—is different from Taiwan and allowed me to explore both specialties in depth. In obstetrics, I observed high-risk pregnancies such as HELLP syndrome and complicated diabetes or cardiac conditions during delivery, gaining valuable insight into multidisciplinary collaboration. I also had the chance to witness C-sections and natural deliveries firsthand. In gynecology, I observed various cancer surgeries and saw how carefully treatment plans were crafted through tumor board discussions. The hospital's structured workflow, clear division of roles, and emphasis on patient-centered care impressed me deeply. This experience not only enhanced my clinical knowledge but also inspired me to continue exploring women's health and cancer care in the future. I'm truly grateful for this opportunity and the kindness of all the staff and mentors I met during my stay.

During my 3-week exchange program in Neurosurgery department, I had the opportunity to witness a wide range of procedures, including indirect bypass of moyamoya disease, several endovascular interventions for cerebral aneurysms, and craniotomy involving occipital, frontal, and temporal bones.

Besides the complexity and severity of patients, the positive learning atmosphere in the Neurosurgery department impressed me the most. Teachers and residents present with high willingness in teaching and guiding at any chances, which were very warm and enriched my knowledge a lot.

I really appreciate the leading and guidance of Professor Fujimura, Dr. Osanai, Dr. Iwasaki, Dr. Ishi, and other teachers in these three weeks. Also, I have many thanks to senior residents. They had always tried their best to teach me and find a way to deepen my understanding of the procedures.

It is a meaningful journey for me to observe the various operations as well as a pattern of team spirit. If you are willing to join the training of the Neurosurgery department, my suggestion is that you can carefully take notes in every morning meetings, which were very detailed and easy to understand with lots of Kanji. It really improved my understanding of the surgeries in the following days. By doing this, I believe you will enjoy the experience in the HKU Neurosurgery!



CHANG, LI-YEN

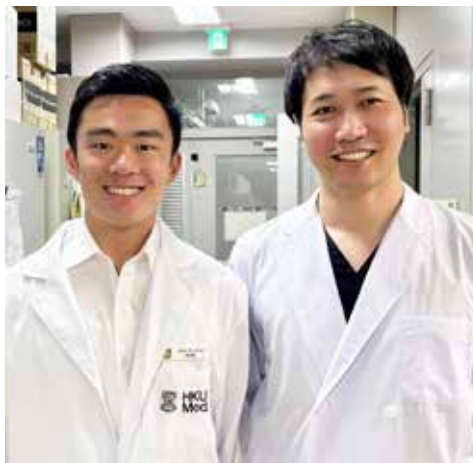
Department of Neurosurgery
Period: May 12 - May 30, 2025

WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

From the University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

At Hokkaido University Hospital's Dermatology Department, my daily activities included participation in outpatient clinics, ward rounds, and clinical-pathological conferences. This tertiary referral centre exposed me to an extraordinary breadth of dermatological conditions that significantly enhanced my diagnostic acumen. I encountered numerous cases of collagen vascular diseases including systemic sclerosis with its characteristic cutaneous manifestations and lupus erythematosus presenting with varied dermatological findings. The department's specialisation in bullous disorders allowed me to study challenging cases of bullous pemphigoid and pemphigus vulgaris, observing how clinical presentation guides diagnostic workup and therapeutic decisions. Particularly valuable was the exposure to cutaneous malignancies, where I followed patients with mycosis fungoides and rare lymphoproliferative disorders like adult T-cell lymphoma through their diagnostic and treatment pathways. The clinical-pathological conference provided profound insights into the diagnostic process, particularly when confronting cases where clinical and pathological findings appeared discordant. Observing the collaborative deliberations between senior dermatologists and pathologists in such complex cases fundamentally enhanced my appreciation for clinicopathological correlation in medical diagnosis.

Professors and doctors here were enthusiastic in teaching and sharing their research interest and novel treatment used in Hokkaido. This experience has significantly influenced my professional trajectory, reinforcing my commitment to pursuing specialist training in internal medicine with potential sub-specialisation in dermatology.



Chan Ho Ching

Department of Dermatology
Period: May 12 - May 30, 2025

During my three-week clinical attachment in the Department of Hematology at Hokkaido University Hospital in May 2025, I gained comprehensive exposure to Japan's advanced healthcare system while experiencing the rich culture of Hokkaido. The experience proved invaluable both professionally and personally.

Through daily clinical activities, I observed how Japan's universal health insurance system enables patients to access cutting-edge hematological treatments at affordable costs. The hospital's specialists demonstrated remarkable expertise in managing complex cases, including rare hematologic malignancies, using evidence-based protocols. This exposure significantly deepened my understanding of specialized care in hematology.



Tang Hoi Chun

Department of Hematology
Period: May 12 - May 30, 2025

Beyond clinical learning, the cultural exchange enriched my experience. Local medical students generously shared insights about both hospital operations and Hokkaido's unique culture. I particularly valued traveling around the region with fellow exchange students from Taiwan, which created lasting friendships and memorable experiences. These personal connections complemented the professional knowledge gained during the attachment.

The program's greatest strength was its balanced combination of rigorous clinical exposure and meaningful cultural immersion. While the language barrier occasionally presented challenges, the welcoming attitude of staff and students ensured these were easily overcome.

This attachment has broadened my medical perspective while fostering personal growth. I highly recommend such international clinical experiences to students seeking to expand both their professional knowledge and global awareness.

WELCOME EXCHANGE STUDENTS

From the University of Adelaide, Australia

I had the pleasure of undertaking a four-week overseas elective at Hokkaido University Hospital, where I spent time in the Department of Paediatrics. Each week, I rotated through a different subspecialty: neonatology, cardiology, neurology, and endocrinology.

Overall, the experience was incredibly rewarding. The doctors were kind, welcoming, and eager to teach. I was exposed to a wide range of conditions, including many rare diseases I had previously only read about. During my paediatrics rotation in fifth year, I had placements in general paediatrics and paediatric ENT, so this elective gave me valuable insight into subspecialties I hadn't encountered before.

I learned a great deal about both common and rare conditions. In the NICU, I saw cases such as congenital heart disease, imperforate anus, and neonatal jaundice. In cardiology, I observed cardiac catheterisations and echocardiograms, and even assisted with a cardioversion. In neurology, I encountered rare genetic disorders and learned about EEG and MEG. Finally, in endocrinology, I saw patients with Donohue syndrome, Prader-Willi syndrome, and more.

I'm very grateful for this opportunity and the kindness of all the staff. I hope students from around the world will consider coming here too — it's an experience I'll never forget.



Sipalak Wongjirathiti

Department of Paediatrics
Period: May 26 – June 20, 2025



Kah Poh Wong

Department of Diagnostic Imaging
Period: May 26 – June 20, 2025

Starting off a bit apprehensive, I quickly came to realise that my experience here at Hokkaido University would be one of my favourite times in med school. Having an interest in radiology, diagnostic imaging was the perfect department for me with exposure to body imaging, neuro imaging, interventional radiology and nuclear medicine over the 4 weeks I was here. Each week was filled with learning opportunities from cases and modules the staff had developed, to normal daily routines of the job. I was lucky enough to attend a seminar allowing me to get practical experience with interventional tools, performing embolisations on a digital simulator. The staff were also very accommodating and most can speak enough English to get the point across, even with a bit of help from AI. I think the most helpful tool for my learning were the cases in the modules they provided, where I was able to open scans and report them with some guiding questions before asking my supervisors to check my work from the day. From my end, this is everything I wanted from radiology teaching and for others who are keen for the field or want to learn a bit more about it, this placement was definitely worth it.



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