

Field Report Summer School Saitama

July 2015, 2 weeks

Saitama Prefectural University, Japan

Student Bachelor Nursing, between 2nd and 3rd year of study

This summer I had the opportunity to attend the Summer School of Saitama Prefectural University. Thanks to this Summer School I experienced many different faces of Japan and developed some of my professional and personal skills.



Why I applied

Last fall we received an e-mail from the international relations manager at ZHAW. She promoted a Japanese Summer School. At this time I just started the 2nd grade which is really demanding as the students have to pass several exams and write essays at the same time. So the offer to be a part of that Summer School was a surprise and change for me. After deliberation and speaking to my friends, I decided to apply. As Japan is a well-developed country quite far away from Switzerland, I thought I could get very interesting insights into another country's health care system and its educational system. Furthermore I liked the idea to live in a Japanese host family to get a real feeling of the Japanese way of living. Another reason why I applied to the Summer School was to get

in touch with nursing students from other countries. In fact I also wanted to open my mind for foreign cultures in combination with my future profession. In my opinion, a good nurse should always be open for different cultures, different ways of living and different ways to reach her professional aims. That's why being a part of this Summer School seemed a perfect opportunity for me to develop my professional and personal skills.

What I learned

I learned lots of different things while attending the SPU Summer School. Health system related subjects, specific skills, nursing in Japan and in Hongkong, working fields for Japanese nurses, Japanese demography, older people's needs and many other things. While trying to understand the mentioned subjects, I compared with Switzerland. I learned how nurses in a Japanese hospital work, even though it was rather difficult to get all the information because of the language difference. The most impressive fact was the calm atmosphere in the ward. It showed me that a hospital also performs well if the staffs are not in such a hurry. So I will try to adopt the calm and professional attitude of the Japanese nurses. In this regard I also learned that calm and cherishing atmosphere can also exist in a stressful context. This stressful atmosphere must not be recognized by the patient. A nurse can also treat her patient extremely cherishing but work effectively the same moment.



The Japanese care I observed also gives the patients a large amount of independence. They have some fixed appointments with the nurses during a day. At eleven o'clock in the morning the daily blood pressure and weight measuring takes place. Then every independent patient comes to the ward office instead of the nurse coming to the patients' room as it is usual in Swiss hospitals. That showed me that giving the patient the strength to be independent is an important factor in his healing process.

My cultural experiences through my home stay

My host family gave me a warm welcome. Even though the communication was quite difficult because my host parent's English skills and my Japanese skills are really poor, we could understand each other by using alternative methods. Thankfully my host sister's English was really good and that helped us a lot to communicate. During my stay at the host family I got an impression of the Japanese way of living. I could enjoy delicious Japanese food, sleeping on a tatami mat and a futon and experience the incredible Japanese summer heat. My host family included me in several activities such as summer festivals, wearing yukatas or showing me the cultural heritages in Nikko. Another confusing thing for me was the left-hand traffic which I experienced while riding the bike. Altogether I enjoyed a great time with my host family who treated me like a true family member.

Feedback

The SPU Summer School 2015 was a successful time in Japan for me. I really enjoyed my visit at SOKA hospital where I was on a ward with a Hongkong student. Through comparing our observations and sharing the habits from our different countries, I could benefit even more. The three days off in the middle of the Summer School were also excellent to spend some time with our host families and to do some sightseeing. The farewell party with our host families was a highlight of the SPU Summer School.

What I need for my future professional career

To be an excellent nurse many qualities and skills are required; a professional attitude towards the patient which includes empathy, cultural, gender and ethical understanding. Furthermore knowledge of physiology and pathophysiology of the human body are fundamental. Technical skills, recognition of symptoms, knowledge of interventions as well as the creation of realistic aims are required. These qualities are basics for a nurse on every ward. In my future professional career I would like to have challenging situations which require rational and objective thinking as well as calmness and the interaction with the patients in a qualified team. By attending the SPU Summer School 2015 I have already widened my cultural understanding and improved my personal skills while getting along in a foreign culture. Those are skills I will need each and every day in my nursing career.