

Name	Toni Huw Mihailidis
Medical School	University of Bristol Medical School
Email (optional)	

Country visited	South Africa
City or town	Cape Town
Hospital/unit/clinic	Tygerberg Academic Hospital
Dates visited	01/04/2019 – 24/05/2019
Supervising doctor	Professor Sammy Al-Benna and Dr Alexander Zühlke
Contact details of your host:	Professor Sammy Al-Benna, Head of the Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

Please give an overview of what you saw / did (200 words max)	This was a clinical elective in the Division of Plastic, Reconstructive, and Aesthetic Surgery at Tygerberg Academic Hospital. As such, I was attached to the Plastic Surgery firm and attended theatres, clinics, and on-call commitments. Typically, this meant 4-5 theatres sessions, 3 clinic sessions, and 1 on-call session per week. Additionally, I was fortunate enough to be able to cultivate my academic interests and work towards a paper whilst there. Overall, this was a wonderful and, for me, as someone with little exposure to Plastic Surgery at undergraduate level, a much-needed opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Plastic Surgery as a discipline and as a career. Undertaking this opportunity in a less well-resourced environment which is different to that of my own was an insightful and enriching experience. All of the above of course is in addition to the wonderful pastimes that Cape Town provided during weekends, from breath-taking hikes, early morning surfs, and the Guinness World Record largest commercial bungee jump in the world!
What were the best things about the visit? (120 words max)	The most important was being part of an amazing, friendly, and eager-to-teach team. I was able to scrub up and assist in the vast majority of cases and, towards the end of my 8-weeks and once appropriately trained, was able to perform minor, day-case procedures e.g. excision of sebaceous cyst, independently under direct senior supervision. Thus, through daily immersion, I was able to drastically improve my theatre etiquette, confidence, and, most importantly, my skills. Whilst I learned a great deal about the 'bread and butter' of a Plastic Surgeon's workload, I was also able to scrub up on rarer cases sponsored by The Smile Foundation and to see pathology that I might not otherwise have seen throughout my career, such as a particularly large ameloblastoma.

What problems did you encounter? (120 words max)

Finally, as mentioned above, Cape Town is an incredible place with an endless list of activities, with something for everyone, from picturesque wine farms, world-famous surf beaches, safaris, hiking and so forth.

Most patients I encountered had at least some command of English. However, during clinics, residents of more rural areas were from communities where English was not spoken. Thinking creatively to communicate with patients, e.g. drawings, and overcoming the language barrier was sometimes difficult to ensure they received the best treatment but was a challenge equally to embrace. This was also an opportunity to learn and gain insight into indigenous languages, such as Xhosa, which have fascinating histories.

Secondly, South Africa contains over 21% of the world's HIV population and one must be comfortable with working