

Global Health – Chengdu, China Clerkship Description

Title of Clerkship: Global Health – China Student Clerkship

Clerkship Site: West China Hospital/Sichuan University School of Medicine, Chengdu, China

Rotation Type:

- Emergency Medicine/Critical Care
- Internal Medicine
- General Surgery
- Orthopedic Surgery
- Cardiology
- Tropical Medicine & Infectious Disease
- Traditional Chinese Medicine
- Psychiatry
- Other medicine/surgical subspecialties may be available on student request

Length of Rotation: 4 weeks with longer rotations possible. Ideal months are October/November, March/April. Not available in February

Department(s): Emergency Medicine

Number/type of students: 2 would be ideal and possibly may be able to take 4 with enough preparation/advanced notice.

UT Faculty: Kris Brickman, M.D.

International Faculty: Dr. Xuehong Wan, (xhwan929@163.com) Director of International Affairs; Administrator and Coordinator for all International Clerkships for West China Hospital
Dr. Jingping Wu, Director of International Affairs Sichuan University
Dr. Yu Cao, (dr.yu.cao@gmail.com)
Dr. Xuehong Wan, Director/Coordinator, Student Liaison
Mr. Jin Chen, Assistant Coordinator

Housing: Students will stay in an international housing facility that currently has approximately 200 international medical students. No other students are in this facility. Most of these medical students are here for 3-5 years to complete their medical education training. Rooms are 1, 2, and 3 bedrooms similar to basic student dormitories but include bathroom and shower facilities, balcony and a television. There are no kitchen facilities in the room but they are available in the dorm on the 1st floor. Many students do cook their own meals in the dorm. Laundry facilities are available at low costs.

Transportation: Hospital is within a 10-15 minute walk from the international housing facility. Local taxis are available for transportation throughout Chengdu for approximately \$1 to \$2. Restaurants, bars, cafes and shopping area are within a short walking distance.

Driving and/or riding bicycles on the roads of Chengdu simply will not be permissible. This would be a death wish for any students who clearly are not prepared for the driving “rules” of Chengdu or any other part of China for that matter. The best way that I can describe the traffic in any of the large cities in China is essentially “demolition derby” only more dangerous. Traffic lights are rarely adhered to at any time. There is no such thing as pedestrian or bicycle right of way for vehicles or other moving objects on the streets of Beijing, Shanghai, or Chengdu.

Language/Communications: Dr. Yu Cao, Medical Director of the Emergency Department will be arranging for a personal tutor for each of the medical students coming to West China Hospital. This will be primarily for language interpretation with patients and hospital staff as necessary. Chengdu is a much more traditional Chinese population than Beijing and Shanghai with a much smaller percentage of the population and hospital personnel speaking English. Most of the patients on the other hand will not speak English and you will need to be with another student, resident or staff member to communicate with patients for your clinical evaluations.

Before you leave, you should make some attempt to speak some Chinese. Some key words/phrases such as; yes, no, hello, goodbye, thank you, how much does this cost, where is the Metro, where is the toilet, will not only help you get around more efficiently but will be greatly appreciative by Chinese people for your attempt to communicate in their language. Since we are on to toilets, keep in mind that not all toilets in China have a seat. Some of these are only a hole in the floor so depending on your method of elimination, you might need to just keep checking more stalls, eventually you should come across one with a seat to accommodate your cultural habits. Also, realize toilet paper can be hard to find in some bathrooms in China so you might want to consider bringing some along if you are out for the day. There are public toilets everywhere and most restaurants, malls and shopping areas have multiple toilets readily available.

Food: A new cafeteria building is being completed and will be available in 9/2009. It is a 5-minute walk from the international housing facility. A meal card will be used for both this student cafeteria and for hospital cafeteria. Local restaurants, bars and cafes are also within a short walking distance.

Foreign Medical and Travel Insurance: You will need to have medical insurance prior to leaving for your foreign destination. This medical insurance will be arranged through CMI (www.culturalinsurance.com) or ISI (<http://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com>) and you will need to complete an application for this. The cost for a four week rotation will be approximately \$50. This insurance will cover any acute medical care, transportation costs and repatriation back to the U.S. Keep in mind that most of these experiences will be in academic medical centers that can clearly provide any minor care that would not warrant the use of this medical insurance. Needless to say, in the event of any illness, you must notify the Office of Global Health immediately so that we can provide any

assistance necessary in managing any medical issues. In the event that you have insurance through your parents that covers any and all of these international activities, it will be required for you to provide proof of this insurance to preclude accessing the above mentioned insurance policy.

No separate liability insurance will be required for your rotation abroad. Your medical student liability coverage will be sufficient to cover your academic responsibilities.

Program Costs: Flight cost to Chengdu \$900 – \$1100. Food and housing is between \$400-500 per student.

While we are talking about money, the monetary system of China is Yuan also known as RMB. The current exchange rate is approximately 7 RMB to 1 U.S. dollar. You should plan on exchanging some of this money at the airport in China before you leave so you have some money to spend in the local area when you arrive at your dorm. Money exchange machines can be found in the luggage pickup area of the airport. It is quite easy to exchange money at many locations throughout Chengdu including the banks, but your most efficient way to exchange money is through the ATM machines virtually everywhere throughout the city. Make sure that you bring your debit card with you to access these ATM's. One nice thing is that they do not charge you that stupid \$3 fee every time you make a withdrawal in China as opposed to the U.S.

Pre Trip Requirements: Vaccinations are not required to travel to China. You must have a VISA to enter China and this will need to be arranged in advance. Typically this will take at least a month ahead of time but this can be rushed on short notice if necessary, although this will cost you some extra money. You will also be required to take your white coat and stethoscope and any pocket reference guides that you rely on for any other clinical rotations. Pre-trip insurance must be arranged for this as well. Also, I would encourage you to have a supply of medications on hand for any acute emergencies particularly GI issues. Imodium and Cipro are the two most common medications that come to mind at this time.

Student risk/potential problems: Travel to any foreign country has its inherent risks that must be considered prior to leaving the US. On these elective rotations, as opposed to traveling with a missionary group, you will not have faculty escorts on this academic adventure. Prior to your departure, safety and security concerns have been addressed to the best of our ability but you will still be functioning independently and anytime you venture outside of the academic and hospital environment, you must be aware of risks that may be compounded by a language barrier. This in no way should detour you from exploring the cultural and recreational activities that each foreign location provides for you but you simply must be cautious and somewhat strategic in how you explore and participate in this foreign landscape.

Specifically, although crime such as theft, sexual assault, etc. has not been a problem in any of our academic locations, students should take appropriate precautions. Women particularly should not venture outside of the campus/housing area alone after dark.

Groups of 2 or more regardless of gender should be safe in this environment. I would strongly encourage all students to not invite problems such as spending late nights in local bars, wearing provocative clothing, engaging in excessive alcohol consumption or more significantly any illegal drug use. These activities will invite problems and I will assure you that you will find it, and there will be little that we can do to assist you particularly if you break their laws. Drug laws especially in foreign countries can be much more problematic than the US and not only could jeopardize your medical career but very likely will jeopardize your own freedom.

In essence, all students must use common sense at all times. Resources that you are normally accustomed to in the US may not be readily available. There will be an international coordinator/liaison who will always be available 24/7 for you to contact if you have any problems. For any problems that might occur, you are to immediately notify the Global Health Office here at the University of Toledo. Be sure to [register with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate on-line](#), by phone, email, fax or in person. Registration helps consular staff contact you if necessary and allows you to receive situation updates.

As far as illness and injury, I would expect most of these issues to be handled at least initially at the hospital where you are completing your rotations. You need to immediately notify the international coordinator on site there as well as the Office of Global Health of any healthcare issues that arise and further ongoing management including potential transportation back to the US will be coordinated through the University of Toledo and the international institution.

- Cultural Activities:**
- Giant Panda Facility
 - Ancient Water Irrigation System
 - Earthquake Zone
 - Museum for Traditional Chinese Medicine
 - Giant Buddha/E' Mei Mountain
 - Sichuan University-new campus.

Cultural activities in Chengdu are quite unique and different from Shanghai and Beijing. Most of the cultural activities in and around Chengdu will require a trip to the countryside where the trip there is as much the experience as the actual site itself. The International Office will help you arrange any or all of these experiences for your weekends off and also will be quite inexpensive.

- Recreational Activities:**
- Jinli Outdoor Market
 - Wensu Fong Outdoor Market
 - Tennis courts
 - Basketball courts
 - Soccer fields
 - Badminton
 - Table tennis
 - Work-out facilities

These are all available on campus and a short walking distance from the hospital and the housing facility.

International Activities: The West China Hospital campus includes 200 international students for long-term medical school education but also involves the University of Utah in a one-month rotation on Ancient Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture.

Discussion - West China Hospital/Sichuan University School of Medicine:

Sichuan University represents one of the largest academic institutions in the world with over 90,000 students on campus. There are approximately 3,000 medical students on the Health Science Campus with over 200 international medical students in long term training programs at Sichuan University School of Medicine. Sichuan University is without question the top training facility in western China.

West China Hospital is the largest hospital in the world with 4,300 beds representing a tertiary network for not only Sichuan Province but approximately a 500-mile geographic area of western China surrounding Chengdu China. West China Hospital is the primary teaching facility for Sichuan University School of Medicine along with the training sight for over 3,000 medical students and also is the training sight for 660 nursing students in the School of Nursing program. West China Hospital alone has over 60,000,000 outpatient visits per year and 140,000 emergency department visits.

A wide variety of rotations are available and can be structured with some limited advance notice. Virtually all medical and surgical specialties are represented in the training programs. Regardless of the type of rotation, the medical students from the University of Toledo will be expected to develop an appreciation and understanding of Traditional Chinese Medicine including the use of Acupuncture, Massage Therapy and Herbal Medicine. They will develop an understanding of the historical and cultural evolution of medicine within China from the Traditional Chinese Medicine to Western Medicine. In addition to their clinical rotation, simulation experience will also be provided to students. Efforts will be made to also incorporate a rural experience into this rotation in one of the community settings that is affiliated with rural West China Hospital and Sichuan University.

Of particular interest in West China Hospital is a state-of-the-art simulation lab that includes 10 training operating theatres that are used for surgical and laparoscopic interventions on animals and simulators. Multiple simulation rooms include Trauma management, Orthopedic management, and Cardiac resuscitation. The laparoscopic facility has 10 separate laparoscopic simulators stations. University of Toledo Medical School rotations will incorporate the simulation laboratory experience as part of their education and training in Chengdu at West China Hospital.

Chengdu is a city of 8,000,000 people representing the largest city in western China. It is primarily an agricultural city with limited industry and a very large educational base

due to the size of Sichuan University. In western China it is near Tibet so it is a much more mountainous, moderate climate than you will find in Beijing or Shanghai. You also will not find the high fashion stores and glamour that you will see in Shanghai and Beijing, but what you will find in Chengdu is the real China. This will likely be a more authentic experience than you will typically find in the more cosmopolitan cities of Beijing or Shanghai.

Dr. Xuehong Wan will serve as administrator/coordinator for all medical student rotations from arrival to departure. He along with his assistant, Mr. Jin Chen will facilitate student transportation on arrival and departure and provide orientation, introduction to department supervisors and coordinate language/tutor. Mr. Chen will assist Dr. Wan on each of these activities during the student's rotation experience. He will complete the evaluation forms and consult with department directors on student's performance and feed-back.

The one thing you will find unique to Chengdu is the food. This is where Sichuan Chinese food originated thousands of years ago and is recognized as being the finest cuisine of China although it is also the spiciest. For an adventure, try one of the "Hot Pot" restaurants. Here they boil any number of varieties of animal and vegetable products in boiling fluid filled with hot red peppers. Kind of like Chinese fondue, but it is fun with a group of people.

On another culinary point, the US recognizes the value of green tea and its health benefits, over coffee. China is moving in an opposite direction to continually westernize the country. You will now find Starbucks virtually everywhere throughout China. I encourage all of you to attempt to discover drinking tea particularly if you are a coffee addict. You will find there is much more depth of flavor with an unlimited number of varieties of tea that you can find throughout China and still get your "caffeine buzz" just not as acutely. Before you leave China, you absolutely MUST try one of the tea house experiences. Tea houses can be found in virtually every city and in fact on most city blocks. Take a group of 3 or 4 people to absorb the ritual of preparing and serving tea in this setting. I guarantee you, you will be hooked through another cultural experience that China has to offer.

Most of Chengdu's cultural activities will require a trip to the local countryside. Since Chengdu typically does not have the traffic issues that Beijing and Shanghai have, you will commonly get there just as fast but you will have a much more scenic ride, and take in much more of the countryside of China than you will in the bigger cosmopolitan cities. International affairs can direct you to the best transportation. There are local group operators that will take you to these different regions quite inexpensively with an all day trip typically costing you around \$25 to \$30. The Giant Panda facility is a unique one of a kind park that has these giant pandas into their natural habitat for them to live and reproduce. The base facility often has infant pandas available for you to see that are often raised by hand and then delivered back into the wooded habitat.

The Three Gorges Areas with the Ancient Irrigation System that still is in place and functions today is a unique experience. This is an incredibly beautiful countryside but

will also provide you some of the history of China experiencing the oldest functional irrigation system in the world.

The area of the Giant Buddha and E'Mei Mountain can be taken in on the same trip. These are historical, religious landmarks that identify origins of the Buddhist religion on E'Mei Mountain and the Giant Buddha that represents the largest sitting Buddha in the world. The earthquake zone would represent a trip to areas of destruction and rebuilding from the catastrophic earthquake outside of Chengdu in April 2008.

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