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April 26, 2009

Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, SWEDEN (Overall rating 5/5)

I did a four week Otolaryngology rotation at Karolinska Universitetsjukhuset Huddinge in Stockholm, Sweden in April of my fourth year of medical school. The hospital was a 15 minute train ride from where I was staying at Jagargatan 20, a student dormitory connected to another hospital, Sodersjukhuset. This was an incredible, fantastic, unforgettable experience and I strongly recommend a rotation at Karolinska to anyone considering it. I would also recommend going sometime in April through August because that is really when Stockholm comes alive and the city in the winter, especially November, can be cold and dark.

Preparation Prior to visit (5/5)

Global Friends emailed me after my acceptance at Karolinska. Then, I was contacted by a student from the Global Friends program prior to my arrival and she was able to give me advice on weather and clothing, etc. and also arranged to have me met at the central train station after my arrival in Sweden. This program is a great way to meet Swedish youth! My Global Friend and I ended up becoming good friends and hung out several times during my trip, and it was nice to have a student to ask questions of even before my arrival. Additionally the Swedish student coordinator, Magdalena Palmqvist, was a helpful source of information and made sure I had everything I needed before my arrival. As far as the rotation was concerned, I did not any receive specific information prior to my arrival except a start date and time, but that was okay, too. You do not need to bring dress clothes, as scrubs are provided to you daily at all hospitals. I also bought Lonely Planet's Stockholm Encounter, which is small enough to carry with you and full of good stuff.

Arrival (5/5)

After landing at Arlanda airport I took a 20 minute express shuttle to T Centralen/Stockholm Central, which is the main train station in downtown Stockholm. I suggest taking the regular slow shuttle which is cheaper and only forty minutes. You can pick up a great free map at the airport, just ask at any information desk. Then I called my contact from a payphone with my credit card (my Global Friend had a test and so sent another student in her place) and we met near a Burger King. He hopped on a train with me to Stockholm Sodra, and from there it is a less- than- one- mile walk to Jagargatan. Or you could take a cab, I guess, although I never did. There are actually several different ways of getting around Stockholm. There is the Tunnelbana, which is the subway within the city, there is the Pendeltoag, the commuter train and the one we took from T centralen, there are buses and there are a few ferries. You can buy a one month travel pass from SL (Access pass) and ride any of them without

limit during that time. Also, Stockholm is a very walkable city. You can even buy a card which allows you use of a great number of public bicycles which are spread about the city.

Studies (4/5)

I spent four weeks with the ENT department at Huddinge. This was the specialty I matched in and in which I had rotated before. Although my experience was fine and the Department was great, I would not recommend rotating in something you have had much experience with for several reasons. Since Swedish is often spoken during patient encounters and during rounds, much learning is nonverbal. So I did not take many patient histories, but concentrated instead on physical findings and being in the operating room. While I did see a number of patients with problems I had not before encountered, I think it would have been a more valuable learning experience had I done something like Ophthalmology or Dermatology, which are visually based. That being said, it was still a worthwhile rotation. The ENT department at Huddinge is fantastic and I spent time with new people almost every day, all of whom were extremely friendly and helpful.

Language (4/5)

This was not a problem during my visit. Almost everyone speaks English if asked, so getting directions, meeting people and taking care of things like food shopping is no problem. Much of the hospital activity is conducted in Swedish, however. This was not ideal for me since I do not know Swedish but is totally understandable and natural. Often, people will speak English if they know you don't speak Swedish, but not always. Attempts to speak Swedish are appreciated and so I did work to pick a little up. It was hard. There is a free language course through Karolinksa that Magdalena Palmqvist can inform you about, but it was not timed with my visit. I wish I would have taken some lessons before I left, but I did not, and one month is not enough time to really learn a language, at least for most people.

Accommodation (5/5)

I stayed at Jagargatan 20, attached to Sodersjukhuset on the island of Sodermalm. Stockholm is a bunch of islands connected by bridges, so that is still in Stockholm. The dorm was clean and safe. I had a small room with a bed, desk, closet, shelving, dresser and sink. A fully equipped kitchen, bathroom and showers were shared by residents on the floor. This is a really, really great living arrangement as you can easily meet people from all over the world who are studying different things at Karolinska. We would often gather in the kitchen and cook and hang out together. I would choose this housing option again.

Also, there is a gym at Huddinge you can use for free with your KI student card, which Magdalena can help you get...

Leisure and Social Activities (5/5)

Stockholm is a fantastic city! There is a seemingly endless amount of things to do and see. I was lucky to form friendships with several Swedish people, from Global Friends and also from friends of my girlfriend and of her family and so was exposed to a lot of Swedish culture. It was also possible to meet

people out at night- Stockholm has a great night life. A short list of some of the more memorable things I did would include- eating Easter lunch in a suburb of Stockholm, going to a student fashion show, going rabbit jumping on a windy Saturday morning, eating kidney, grilling in the park, dancing until early in the morning and going to dinner at a new friend's house in another suburb of Stockholm. In the day, there are many museums and other places of cultural/historical interest, shopping, people watching, etc. I spent a lot of time exploring the city by foot. There are many guidebooks to choose from; like I said I used Lonely Planet's Stockholm encounter.

If you are considering coming to Stockholm and want any more specific information I am really more than happy to help you. You can email me at antonkushnaryov@hotmail.com.