

First rotation is finally in the books! Looking back, I feel like this was a great rotation to start with because it offered such a broad exposure to different cases (being that it was a PCP office). I not only got to manage acute and chronic conditions but also participate in a variety of procedures, such as IM injections, venipuncture, and EKG placement. The staff was very welcoming and guided me along the way, which made it easy to ask questions. Most importantly, I had the opportunity to brush up on my Chinese ☺ and learn new Chinese medical terminology!

Something new that I learned during this rotation is how to manage a patient presenting with low hemoglobin. For example, 45-year-old female with a history of intramural fibroids came to the office with a hemoglobin of 6.4 g/dL. She appeared fairly well but reported fatigue. In class, we were taught that patients with hemoglobin this low should typically be sent immediately to the ED for a blood transfusion. However, in this case, my preceptor gave the patient two options: go to the ED or start PO iron supplements three times daily. The patient ultimately chose to pursue the latter.

The most memorable experience from this rotation was performing my first EVER patient venipuncture. It was on a young patient and I'm really thankful that he offered his arm. To be honest, I was shaking and nervous since I didn't want to mess it up. (P.S. The patient was calmer than I was.) With guidance from the nurse, I was able to complete the procedure successfully. YAYAYAYAYAYAYAY!!!! From that point on, I performed venipuncture nearly every day. The nurse also showed me some useful techniques, which I'll be sure to apply during my next rotation.

I think the most challenging type of patients I had to deal with were those with chronic conditions who had difficulty adhering to treatment plans. For example, I saw a patient with long-standing hypertension who was inconsistent with medications and lifestyle changes. This was challenging because I had to balance being informative and encouraging without sounding judgmental. Ultimately, I realized that simply giving instructions isn't always enough. Patients need to feel heard and understood so instead of telling the patient that he needs to do this and that, I asked him about his daily routine and found a slot in his day where he could consistently take his medications.

Overall, this rotation had its ups and downs, but it was an incredibly valuable learning experience. There were moments where I didn't know how to explain a medical concept in Chinese (I even had to use Google Translate a few words) but these moments pushed me to improve my medical vocabulary and find better ways to communicate with patients. If you asked me what is the one thing that I learned about myself during this 5-week rotation, I would say that it is okay to not know everything right away. What matters most is being willing to ask questions and use each challenge as an opportunity to learn and grow.