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Medical study in Britain and Malaysia

THE Asean Sheffield Medical College provides an opportunity for students to gain a University of Sheffield medical degree by combining study in UK and Malaysia.

Students admitted to the programme spend the first two years of the course in the Medical School at the University of Sheffield, and return to the Asean Sheffield Medical College in Ipoh, to complete the three clinical years of the course. The course therefore prepares the students for clinical practice in Malaysia.

Successful students are awarded the University of Sheffield MB ChB Degree, which is fully recognised by the Malaysian Medical Council.

The course followed by the students of the Asean Sheffield Medical College is identical to that followed by students at the University of Sheffield. During the first two years students from the college are fully integrated with those at the University of Sheffield.

The structure of the course itself has been designed to embrace the "spectrum" of clinical diseases with which students will need to be familiar in order to practise in South-East Asia, and also takes on board the differences in medical practice between the UK and South-East Asia.

The first two years of the course are spent at the University of Sheffield, studying the basic clinical sciences which underpin clinical medicine. Returning to Ipoh for the remainder of the course, students develop clinical skills, study a number of specialisms in medicine and surgery and have an opportunity to study anywhere in the world on an elective period for three months.

The first intake of ASMC students, a total of 30, started the course in Sheffield in September 1996. They include, not only Malaysians, but also students from Kenya, Sri Lanka, India, Jamaica, Tanzania, Indonesia and Hong Kong. Some have been fortunate to receive sponsorship from funding bodies including JPA (Malaysia) and the Hong Kong Government.

After these two years in Sheffield, the students will return in the summer of 1998 to the purpose-built college. The ground-breaking ceremony for the college was performed on July 4 by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed.

The college will be furnished with state-of-the-art facilities, including academic, technical and clinical laboratories, lecture theatres, seminar rooms and an extensive library. It also features electronic links with the University of Sheffield, Information Technology rooms and a Pathology Museum.

The college is situated immediately next to Hospital Ipoh. The clinical teaching is based in this hospital but it is also conducted in other hospitals, health centres and polytechnics in Perak.

Both the university and the college are eager to develop close links, not only between staff but also students.

To this end, there are currently four students from the University of Sheffield's UK programme undertaking their elective in Ipoh. They are both British and Malaysian students.

It is intended to develop this two-way exchange of knowledge. To facilitate this the university has already established a postgraduate programme in Malaysia and from 1997 will be running four separate postgraduate courses in adult medicine, paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, and surgery. The paediatric course has in fact been underway

for the last two years and is the only one of its kind in South-East Asia. The success rate of young doctors sitting the paediatric exam for the Royal College of Physicians is very high - a fact which has been recognised by the 1996 clinical examination for the diploma of MRCS being held in Ipoh.

The ASMC is an exciting development which will allow students to become qualified doctors in Malaysia, familiar with local conditions and diseases, backed with the expertise of one of UK's top medical schools and will support the development of medicine in Malaysia.

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