

## **A Travelogue: My Two Weeks In Japan**

When I embarked on my travelling fellowship to Japan, I knew I was in for an enriching experience. What I did not anticipate, however, was just how much my time in Osaka Children's Hospital would change my perspective

both professionally and personally. This travelogue is a reflection of my time in Osaka, highlighting the unique blend of cultural immersion and medical advancement that defined my journey.

### **Arrival in Japan: First Impressions**

The moment I landed in Japan, I was struck by the seamless harmony between modernity and tradition. Osaka, known for its vibrant street food culture and warm hospitality, welcomed me with open arms. I was received at the airport by Dr Ayami Ketagawa who also gave a gist of my schedule even before I arrived. The city's efficient transportation system made it easy to navigate, and my initial apprehensions about language barriers quickly dissipated as I encountered the kindness of the locals.

### **Day One: Stepping into Osaka Children's Hospital**

Walking through the doors of Osaka Children's Hospital for the first time was both exhilarating and humbling. The hospital's architecture was a testament to functionality and compassion. From brightly lit corridors adorned with child-friendly artwork to state-of-the-art medical facilities, every detail was designed with the young patients in mind. Compared to what I see every day, it was truly futuristic. I was also very impressed with the amount of respect they give to seniors.

The orientation session provided by Dr Higuchi (Prof and Head) was a comprehensive overview of the hospital's mission and values. I was introduced to Dr.Kawabata in the theatre whose expertise and approachability made me feel instantly at ease, I was thrilled to see his blessed hands operate on a child with Apert syndrome with Sundactyly, and correction of Flexion deformity of knee in another child with Pteregium. My schedule for the next few days followed with getting involved in observing intrathecal baclofen for first time , limb lengthening in Achondroplasia and few other surgeries, I also learned Ultrasound guided traction assisted closed reduction in children with developmental dysplasia of hip.

### **Cultural Immersion: Life Beyond the Hospital**

My evenings and weekends were dedicated to exploring Osaka and its surroundings. I indulged in culinary delights such as takoyaki and okonomiyaki, savoring flavors that were as vibrant as the city itself. A visit to Osaka Castle provided a glimpse into Japan's rich history, while a stroll through the bustling streets of Dotonbori revealed the city's modern charm.

A day trip to Kyoto, with its serene temples and picturesque gardens, offered a stark contrast to Osaka's urban energy. The experience of participating in a traditional tea ceremony was both calming and enlightening, teaching me the value of mindfulness and simplicity. I was accompanied by Dr Otzuki whose house I was able to visit and meet his family with 3 beautiful children, I was overwhelmed by their love and hospitality.

### **Lessons Learned: A New Perspective**

As my days in Osaka came to an end, I found myself reflecting on the invaluable lessons I had learned. The experience underscored the importance of holistic care—where medical excellence is complemented by cultural sensitivity and empathy. It also reinforced my belief in the power of global collaboration in advancing healthcare.

### **Gratitude and Farewell**

I am deeply grateful to Osaka Children's Hospital for their warm welcome and to my mentors for their guidance. This fellowship has not only enriched my professional knowledge but also broadened my horizons, reminding me of the universal values that unite us in our pursuit of better health for all.

I was also able to meet other brilliant minds across Japan at JPOA annual meeting and interact with other fellows at Fukuoka . This meeting gave me a platform to present my paper as well.

As I boarded the flight back home, I carried with me not just memories, but also a renewed sense of purpose and inspiration. My time in Japan was a journey of discovery—one that I will cherish for a lifetime. I'll always be grateful to JPOA for the opportunity provided.

Dr Jonathan Reddy.







