

Kijabe Hospital  
Kijabe, Kenya

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This was my second time to this hospital after spending a month between my second and third year and an even better experience than last time. They are used to having 4<sup>th</sup> years spend 1-2 months at a time (2months is preferred but I did one) and have between 1 -4 students usually. I went with a surgical focus and spend most of my time rounding, operating, and going to clinic with one of the 3 staff general surgeons. Another student did mainly OB, another mostly peds.

The hospital sees lots of chronic diseases that have not been treated, or even more often mishandled at other hospitals. You will see plenty of HTN, PUD, diabetes, disseminated TB, AIDS, advanced cancer, osteomyelitis, and subacute trauma. The more exotic cases I saw included scrofula, hydatid cysts, end-stage rheumatic heart disease, typhoid, and an elephant goring. Money is a huge factor for nearly all patients as everything is fee for service and people must also pay for transportation to and from the hospital.

Students took call roughly q4/5 and consulted the intern and/or attending on call. During call you covered the entire 200 bed hospital and new admissions although the intern handled all night OB calls. This was not as bad as it sounds unless you had several unstable patients or a trauma came in.

During the day, students could be involved in general medical clinic or a handful of subspecialty clinics if you set it up (diabetes, surgery, peds, high-risk OB) There are also occasional rural clinics which are fantastic ways to see the country and people if also to get bounced around in the back of a Land Rover for 4 hours.

There is a language barrier here even though English is one of the official Kenyan languages along with Swahili. Learning a bit of Swahili is very helpful and not very difficult at all; however, you will probably still need to commandeer a nurse to help translate. Even the nurses may be confounded to understand some of the patients who trek here from places like Sudan or Somalia. One thing I can say about the Kenyan people in general is that they are dignified, grateful, full of good humor, and incredibly tough. This is a mission hospital run by the African Inland Church with a strong Christian religious emphasis. I used World Medical Missions/Samaritan's Purse as a logistical go-between with the hospital (828-262-1980 contact Mary Snead). This hospital and its parent church believe strongly in personal salvation for the sick patient as well as food medical care. If you are not someone with a personal faith that you want to share with others you may not be comfortable here.

Accommodations are really comfortable – hot showers, electricity, full kitchen (you buy groceries and make most of your own meals), 5 minute walk to the hospital, the hospital station just got internet as I left. The station is very safe even at night when you get paged to the wards in the wee hours. Also, students often get together to spend a weekend at a game park for the safari experience.