

# Medical Camps: A Student's Perspective



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As an ardent third year medical student who is just like many others yearning to obtain more clinical and field experience, medical camps are one of the events which can please my longing. Well, you might be wondering how is that achieved? Actually, medical camps do provide a favourable platform for medical students to practise and improve simple skills such as communication, blood pressure measurement and others. These skills may seem trivial but I can assure you that the mastery of handling such skills cannot be easily obtained without practise, especially for those who are inexperienced and what more to say when there is a huge crowd to deal with. Most importantly, I realised that it provides a glimpse on how it feels to serve the community and this emotional engagement reflects passion. Since no two minds can be similar to one another, different individuals will gain different insights from such occasions. However, what I do believe is regardless of the variations, such experience will definitely bring joy, excitement and satisfaction. Do

you remember your first time taking part in any medical camp and how it felt or what it meant to you? To many medical professionals who are already actively working in this field and who are also presumably used to aiding medical camps, such events may be thought as nothing much but just another occasion of public service. However, I would like to ambitiously restructure the existing perception here by sharing about a medical camp that I recently took part in.

Personally, I have participated in various numbers of medical camps but with my utmost respect to all medical camps for their inarguable noble intentions, the quality of medical camps may vary with one another. Recently, I was handed an opportunity to pledge my service in a medical camp held at Sik, Kedah, organised by the prestigious *Council of Justice of The Peace State of Kedah Darul Aman* with the cooperation of the widely renowned MMA Kedah branch. This particular medical camp is one worth mentioning as it has exposed

me to new insights that I would like to share and express here. Little was known to me regarding the camp before I travelled to the venue. Although I was as excited as always when it comes to attending such activities, frankly at the back of my mind I thought that this would be just another typical medical camp with the usual characteristic routine. However, my erroneous assumption proved me wrong! I was totally flabbergasted with the scale of manpower from different medical specialities working together as a team and mutually supporting each other. At that instant, I knew immediately that this medical camp was somehow different from the previous ones I have participated in, and fortunately I was right.

Besides the routine screening programmes for diseases with the iceberg phenomena, there were a wide variety of medical specialities present too. Those which caught my attention were Ophthalmology, Psychiatry, Dentistry, and Audiology. This was not because they were superior but because of the



facilities they provided. It is always understandable that sophisticated devices are not possible to have in most medical camps due to the availability of resources and needless to say, the difficulty in transportation. In this camp however, I was amazed by the sight of a moving dental clinic or better known as '*klinik pergigian bergerak*' which carried dental equipment that was otherwise also difficult to transport. The fact that they brought multiple banners and models to be exhibited in a scale that I had not seen before had nevertheless blown me away. The Ophthalmology station provided by the *1Malaysia Moving Clinic* for treatment of cataract also had necessary devices for visual examinations such as visual acuity, cataracts and refractory errors, as well as on-the-spot prescriptions for eyeglasses. The overwhelming reception of this unit by the community made me realise at that moment that many people were suffering from visual problems! This incident made me understand the importance of approaching the community in different ways in order to understand the problems of the society.

Furthermore, I was also touched by the sincerity and prudence shown



by the organisers to ensure good quality service was being provided to the people. To overcome the noise pollution at the original site planned for the Audiology station, the organisers promptly made an effort to relocate the station to a quieter location at the *surau*.

The huge variety of medication and prescription drugs that were available made this camp even more special as it seemed to me as if it was more of a clinic than a medical camp; what made it even better was that they were free of charge! These drugs would be costly if they were to be bought at the clinic or pharmacy. This was a sight that struck my mind so hard, I could barely comprehend my surroundings at that moment. All these actions had made a huge impression and taught me a lesson on how we must always exert our best, especially when it comes to helping the community.

This medical camp was concise and I would undoubtedly regard it as complete and well-rounded. However, I believe that it is a rule that regardless of how well anything is done, there will always be room for improvement and this medical camp is not an exception. Since this medical camp was so well-equipped and beyond adequate, it should have received more reception and participation from the local community. There should be more effort to publicise this medical camp by putting up more banners, though resources could be a major challenge. Although it is true that everyone, including the public, should be aware and responsible for their own health, it is also the responsibility of the medical personnel to create awareness towards health. After all, that is what defines the medical profession. Moreover, it would also be better if the names of specialities that will be present during the medical camp, be listed on the banner. This is because, as I have noticed during medical camps, the community does not know which specialities would be present. In this camp for example, the preparation by the Psychiatric Unit to provide stress assessments, one-to-one talks and explanations

about mental health, were rather underappreciated. Also, it would be a waste for the medical providers to be so well-equipped if they do not receive the expected attention from the community. To further brighten things up, proper soothing background music can be played at an acceptable volume. After all, music is part of everyone's life!



To conclude, I truly believe that medical camps are important events for both the public and also those who are new to the medical field. To be exact, medical camps act as a platform where students from the field of health sciences can hone and learn simple skills that may not be obvious to many, but which are actually vital for their future practices. It is also a gateway to know more about the society and thus an ideal place to sharpen communication skills and improve efficiency and speed in performing simple procedures such as measuring blood pressure. At the same time, we may learn the ways to organise a successful medical camp. Anyone can have the chance to organise a medical camp at their local community in the near future and the next person could be you! Hence, knowing how to run one successfully will be vital. Last but not least, I would like to reiterate that medical camps of good quality must be ensured if they are to be held, and everyone involved should get the most out of it! This medical camp is one of the most unforgettable experiences I have had so far. With this, I hope you would be able to feel and share my excitement as well!