First international GEMx global exchange student welcomed to WCMC-Q

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Dr. Sohaila Cheema, Raji Anand and Dr. Ravinder Mamtani with Sana Khan (front).

WCMC-Q has hosted its first international exchange student through the Global Education in Medicine Exchange (GEMx) program.

Sana Khan, currently in her final year of studies at Manipal College of Medical Sciences in Nepal, spent two weeks taking an elective in sports medicine at WCMC-Q’s partner institution, Aspetar Orthopaedic and Sports Medicine Hospital. The placement was arranged through WCMC-Q’s membership of GEMx, which is a global partnership of medical schools that facilitates student exchanges among institutions based in 16 countries around the world, including Egypt, Chile, Ireland, Malaysia and Australia.

GEMx, which is a program of the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG), is building a network comprised of international medical school deans, administrators, faculty, global health experts, and students who share a commitment to advancing global exchange in medical education. GEMx offers a web-based system through which universities can publish details of the electives they offer. Students can use the system to apply for the electives, safe in the knowledge that the host school has signed up to the GEMx/ECFMG charter, which guarantees established standards of student support and pre-agreed learning outcomes. Partnership is central to the GEMx vision.

Sana, aged 23, said: “It was such a great opportunity for me to take an elective at a world-class institution and I am truly grateful to everyone at WCMC-Q, Aspetar and GEMx and my college in Nepal for making this possible. Being placed at Aspetar, which provides healthcare to top-level athletes, has shown me a completely different perspective on medicine than I had from working in the hospital in Nepal, where we mainly serve a community of people with modest incomes.

“It has been fascinating to see the state-of-the-art technology available at Aspetar and to work with the excellent physicians they have there. I was very fortunate that the doctors made a great effort to involve me in many aspects of care, from patient consultations and physical examinations to interpreting x-rays and MRI scans.”

Dr. Ravinder Mamtani, associate dean for public health at WCMC-Q, is chair of the GEMx Advisory Committee.

He said: "It has been a great pleasure to welcome Sana to WCMC-Q and to see her gaining so much from her elective at our partner institution, Aspetar. She is an extremely bright and intellectually curious student, and she has given both students and faculty here great insight into the practice of medicine in Nepal. Sana has served as a superb ambassador for her school in Nepal, as well as providing a wonderful example of just how mutually beneficial the GEMx program can be for the partner universities involved."

Dr. Sohaila Cheema, director of global and public health at WCMC-Q, said: "We look forward to welcoming many more GEMx exchange students to WCMC-Q in future, and to seeing our own students discover more about the practice of medicine in other parts of the world by visiting GEMx partner schools in Asia and Oceania, Europe, South America and other parts of the Middle East.”

GEMx Director Anna Iacone said: "ECFMG and GEMx are highly committed to fostering a network of committed individuals. As Sana experienced, we are seeing high-quality exchange opportunities for our students through GEMx. She is one of the many success stories. Through the partnership, students are gaining different perspectives on medicine that not only make a positive impact on students and their careers, but when serving their local health care communities as well-rounded medical professionals.”