

Lots of Work Inside Krakow Hospitals, and Lots of Beauty Outside

By Rahim Lakhani (2020)



Rahim Lakhani, 2020 (left) and Dr. Henryk Liszka

In January of 2020, I was fortunate to participate in the two-week exchange program in Krakow, Poland through Jagiellonian University. I was excited to learn about a different health care system, observe various podiatric and orthopedic surgeries, and interact with healthcare professionals in a different setting. During my first week in Krakow, I spent the majority of my time shadowing Dr. Henryk Liszka, a renowned foot and ankle surgeon, at Szpital Uniwersytecki W Krakowie in Prokocim (Department of Orthopedics and Physiotherapy). I was able to scrub into a variety of cases with Dr. Liszka and his residents, including flat foot reconstruction, minimally invasive bunions, percutaneous Achilles repair, hammertoe correction, ankle and knee arthroscopies, along with many other surgeries. When the surgery schedule was light, I was able to jump into other cases including repair of a hip fracture, calcaneal fracture, and knee replacement. Additionally, I spent time in the hospital clinic, where I observed many post-op cases.

My second week in Krakow took place in the Ortopedicum hospital (Department of Orthopedics). Each day I spent time with different healthcare professionals and was able to observe the rehabilitation clinic, physical therapy clinic, and orthopedic/gym clinic. I learned how to treat patients using the various modalities and equipment.

The majority of patients I interacted with had undergone recent hip replacements, knee replacements, or major reconstructive surgery after a traumatic incident. I was able to utilize manual therapy, cryotherapy,

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laser therapy, hydrotherapy, ultrasound machines, extracorporeal shock wave therapy, and continuous passive motion devices. Furthermore, the physiotherapists and I assisted post-op patients with range of motion and weight bearing exercises.

Outside the hospital, Poland is a historical place with so many attractions. Krakow is relatively inexpensive, which gives visitors like myself the opportunity to dive into experiencing the Polish culture and cuisine. I enjoyed eating various pierogis, zurek (soup), bigos, paczek, and much more. The architecture of the city was stunning. Wawel Castle, built in the 1500s, was one of many beautiful attractions sites in the city center. I spent one of my Saturdays at the Wieliczka Salt Mine, located over 300 meters' underground. It was fascinating to see the art work carved out of salt, especially the Salt Cathedral of Zipaquira. I participated in the walking tour in the Jewish Quarter and was able to appreciate the architecture and cuisine of the neighborhood. I spent time around the Main Square area, taking in the beautiful Polish architecture, delicious restaurants, and numerous shopping boutiques in Cloth Hall. I enjoyed visiting several museums in Krakow including Schindler's Factory Museum, Rynek Underground Museum, Historical Museum of Krakow, Kosciuszke Mount Museum, National Museum in Krakow, Jagiellonian University Museum, Pharmacy Museum, John Paul II Cathedral Museum, Museum of Illusions, and the Krakow Pinball Museum.

One of the most eye-opening and truly heartbreaking places I visited was the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, a few days after the 75th anniversary of the liberation. I will never forget this trip and



St. Mary's Basilica in Main Square



Wawel Royal Castle

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am grateful to have been given the opportunity to work with Jagiellonian University and the affiliated hospitals.



St. Kinga's Chapel inside the Wieliczka Salt Mine underground



Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp