

Cairo-Report

Abroad Semester WS 2008/2009

University & Hospital

Generally I liked the lectures very much.

In my first two weeks I had pharmacology in the University Hospital El Qasser El Ayni, this hospital is a big complex with a medical campus inside. I have never seen such a big complex before. There was a lecture and a practical training available for foreign students (all of them Malaysian 3rd year students). It was not a frontal lecture, but more interactive and the curriculum and contents had got American style, very good. Lectures will be held on Sundays 10 to 12 am and Mondays from 10 to 12 am. The practical training on Mondays 8-10 am. The practicals are comparable with our German seminars plus demonstration of some experiments sometimes. I can say Malaysian students are very tough and young in addition. The chief of Pharmacology Departments name is Prof. Ahmed Hussein Galal. His email address is : ahmedgalal65@hotmail.com. His office telephone number is 0124555078, just for the case you have got some questions in advance. By the way, the country code number of Egypt is 0020. The exam of pharmacology was special designed for me, containing a theoretical lecture and a practical part. The next 2 weeks, I continued visiting the pharmacology lectures and started like it was planned with Pathology. Pathology lectures have been twice a week. On Wednesdays from 7 to 10 am and on Sundays from 12:30 to 15:30 pm. On Wednesdays after the lectures at 10 there is practical until 12 in which the Malaysian students have got the possibility to share some microscopes with the other more than 100 students. These were very poor circumstances, so I didn't want to take the place and the chance of Malaysian students to have a look through the microscopes. Furthermore it was too stressful for me to fight and wait for microscopes because I wasn't used to it in our university. After the microscoping at 12 there is a demonstration of preparations in the demonstration museum. But I was there sometimes, but always when I wanted to join them, there was some intervenes making it impossible. One day there was a conference and it was cancelled. The other day they cancelled it in the museum and it took place somewhere I was not aware of it.

In my exam, I got a special designed exam from the head of department Mrs. Prof. Soheir Mahfouz. Containing 30 mc questions and 10 mc pictures on her laptop in her office.

Her email address is: soheirmahfouz@yahoo.com

Her office telephone number is: (202) 23596570

And her Mobile number is: 0127463688

In the following two weeks I took part in Microbiology and Immunology and visited parallel the other lectures. The Microbiology/ Immunology lectures were on Saturdays from 9 to 13 pm followed by the practicals until 3 pm.

In Mibi/ Immuno I just wrote the midterm exam and it was at the same time my theoretical and practical mark. But first you have to speak to all Chief of departments how to handle with your mark.

Then in the beginning of December there were some holidays which I used to travel around Egypt together with my friend who arrived in Cairo at 8 th December. From middle December until the end of December I joined my practical training in General and Plastic Surgery. Perhaps the most stressful time. The residents were all nice , but so stressed that we even didn't have got time to exchange things or talk about anything . Putting some questions was a luxuriance there was no time for . And the hygiene is very low. Doctors even don't know or don't care to wash themselves surgically after scrubbing in. and your scrubs and shoes from the street you take into the operation room. But I was wondering the post-operation infection rate didn't seem to be much higher than in Germany.

On Monday and Thursday there was Surgery day and the other days they took care for patients in the patient clinic with small surgery procedures like circumcising of boys or removing cysts. And some days they were in their station to look for the post OP patients or preparing for OP like on Sundays, the only day I think the chief of department was available in the department.

From beginning until middle of January I was in Gynecology and Obstetrics. My supervisor was Dr. Dalia Farouk, a very nice 3rd year resident who cared for me. The schedule in Gyne for me as student was like this.

Saturday was clinic day. On Sunday was emergency day and Dr. Dalia had to stay for 24 hours, so you can join her and stay with her whenever you want. I joined her in the evening but didn't stay there so long. On Monday and Wednesday you are free. Tuesday was clinic day again and on Thursdays there was surgery. Of course on Friday you are free also because it is the only official holiday in the week , comparable with our Sunday.

Prof. Tharuat is Chief of Department on 2nd floor. I think I haven't never met him.

In the end , my special thanks to Mona. She is the right hand of Mr. Dr. Mahmoud (chief coordinator) who was at that time in Austria making there his PhD. Mona was a very nice, polite and helpful person. I cant imagine that EAIMS would work in that way it works without her.

Some sentence to the schedule you are giving in for the first time to EAIMS through ZiB some months before.

I was told, you could change your schedule locally and that everything is easy. In my case it was not (so easy), but I know from a female fellow student who was there at the same time with me, that the coordinator afforded her to make any changes she wants. Dr. Mahmoud said to me it was not possible because of bureaucracy, but in the end he made a small exception in Gynecology, because he is himself a Gynecologist in this department and could overgo this bureaucracy through his connection. In my opinion there is even more bureaucracy than in Germany.

Living

The weather is always good. Even in winter it is 20 degrees with sunshine, but with wind. In the night it cools down to 10 degrees . watch Wikipedia for climate details.

There are cheap hostels available. The best I think is Ismaila Hostel on Tahrir Square. It costs 65 le (8 euro) a night , inclusive breakfast which I didn't like . you have to check out at 11 am.

But on tahrir square there are so many other cheaper ones, dormitories and other sharing possibilities.

Housing

Mediaf.g@gmail.com is the emailaddress of my landlord whose apartment I rented.

I lived in a flatshare together with flatmates from USA, Italy, France and Germany. The atmosphere was good until very good depends on who moved in and out. In Cairo there is a big expat community being in email contact with each other through cairoscholars. When u want to know how to join this community, see below (copy paste from Cairo Guide Report 2007)

The email group CairoScholars, offered by the universtity of Texas, is very useful. Almost every day you find people posting open flats or trying to find a flatmate. Of course you can take the initiative yourself to find people or open places by writing an e-mail to the group. To join CairoScholars there is two options. Either you subscribe at:

<https://utlists.utexas.edu/sympa/info/cairoscholars>

Or send the subscribe command: subscribe CairoScholars@utlists.utexas.edu to:

sympa@utlists.utexas.edu

My landlord was an honest , helpful and trustful person. He is engineer and his wife is half german. He told me to public his emailaddress and his cell phone (012 3698485 or 010 3078485) number for Cologne medical students to contact him if they want to stay in Cairo. The rent was 1450 LE, that's nearly 200 euro a month. It is not very cheap for cairo conditions, but is in Garden City (on of the best districts) next to the American and English Embassy and 12 minutes by foot to the hospital, very near to downtown and the Nile.

I got the flat from my fellow student who stayed in this room but had to leave back to Cologne. She was very nice and helped me very much the first days. Here again, Thank u for your hospitality ,Tania.

Telephone:

You go into a mobile shop and ask for a simcard. E.g. from the provider mobinil. Then u pay uniquely an amount of I don't remember anymore exactly, but sth. Like 100 le (13 euro).

There are some minutes for talking included. When u haven't got any credits anymore, you got to a mobile shop and charge for minimum 50 LE, 100 LE.

Internet:

In my flat Internet was available, but unfortunately not so fast and without wlan. So consider when you choose a flat how important a good connection is for you.

Transportation:

Avoid Taxis. But when you use them there are two ways to get sure not to be cheated. Either (recommended for the beginning) agree a price ahead or (when you live in Cairo for a while and know the true prices) just sit in, don't tell anything and pay in the end the price you think of it is fair after you get off the taxi and then just turn around and go. Don't let them talk to you and don't get involved in trades like in the bazar. And don't be afraid of anything. You are right and even if the police comes you will get right. So just be stubborn and don't pay the price they want you to pay.

Buses are nice, but nearly impossible without a map and any Arabic knowledge.

Metro is very cheap 1-2 LE, fast and secure, too. Just watch out if the flat you want to move in has got a metro station by the way.

Eat and Drink:

LE is the abbreviation for (Livre Egypt) and means the same like EP (egyptian pouns)

1kg dates: 4 le 1kg big bananas: 12 LE 1kg Kaki: 4LE 1 l milk: 6.75 LE

Sandwiches around 8 LE 1 l water bottle: 2 LE (attention: some water marks are with high sodium content like 40 or higher, but healthy would be sth. Less 10)

Shopping: Nearly all streets around Tahrir Square have got big shops, malls etc.

Sightseeing:

There are many sightseeing in Cairo and outside Cairo, but for this I think it is better to read a travel guide or Wikipedia.

Sports:

There are two gyms I know. The first one I was, is near Tahrir Square, at the corner of the street Pizza Hut is, the street is called Mohamad Mazlum street I think; contrary to the old AUC (American University of Cairo). 55 LE for one month or 5 LE for each session.

The 2nd one is on Roshdy street 10. A bit far away (15 minutes by foot) from tahrir square. Prices are quite the same. 55 LE and 5 LE for each session, but this one is bigger but more crowded also. In both gyms I haven't ever seen a female.

Running: You can jog here, because here there is Greenfield and not crowded, loud and dirty.

The Shabab Gezira fields are on Gezira island, directly underneath the 6th October Bridge (the middle bridge on the island, just north of the Cairo Tower). to get there, just stand directly below the bridge on the Nile side of Gezira, and

walk

10 seconds north up the road to see the fields on your left.

The entrance is 3 LE, except on Fridays it is 4 LE.

Visa: About the visa I was told that it is valid for three months (which is not true) after you enter the country and buy the visa in one of the money change looking ticket office in which you can by the way change money , too.

Miscellaneous:

Buses cost 1 LE metro 1 LE, taxi drivers cheat, avoid them, except some with line meters; but as a rule of thumb you can say that per each minute taxidiving you should pay one pund.

A general rule: to avoid bringing yourself in inconvenient situations, always ask for prices ahead.

In Egypt you have to pay for everything, nearly nothing for the most people is gratis, especially when you are a foreigner and they think you are rich. So not to bring yourself in inconvenient situations, try to do everything yourself, don't let people carry your bags, avoid estate agents and others .

When you want to leave home, get sure, that you don't need to go to toilet outside. Because there are no restrooms available, except in some restaurants, but they are not always that clean as you are used to it. Even toilets in some department were so dirty, I rarely have seen like this before, but I must confess it was not so bad smelling, some corners in cairo smell worse.

There are only few refuse bins on the streets.

Cairo is very secure and I always felt safe, because nearly everywhere are police officers, security forces and nightwatchers for shops or houses. And people there are very peaceful and polite. So there was no aggressive potency . And the city is living, not for nothing cairo is called "the city that never sleeps".

And the fruits and vegetables are very tasteful and cheap besides. Try the dragon fruit (1kg cost 20 LE).

By the way, Cairo has not got a good night life. Everybody who says sth. Different, wants to put lipstick on the pig. Don't believe these people.

Overall, I liked Cairo, although it is a loud and dirty city. Egyptians are also very good people. I gained many experiences and therefore do it again.

At this point I want to thank the whole team of our Center for International Relations. They make a really good job.

My humble self Ali Mohammad Nejad Sigaroudi