

Report about the fellowship in Tampere University Hospital

written by Daisuke Kaji (1.1.2020-6.30.2020)

During the hand surgery fellowship, every weekday you are expected to be in the office at around 07.30. Usually daily activities end by 15.00, but emergency cases are operated 24/7. Almost every evening some emergency operations have been performed and you can join these if you want. You might be usually free to choose daily activities, but you should check tomorrow's schedule. There is a meeting of some sort pretty much every morning, that you are expected to attend (meetings are in Finnish). You will also have to prepare a couple of presentations to other hand surgeons (I gave them in English about "Complex of the tissues of hand: some cases"). If you don't have any preference, you'll be given some topics.

As for on call duties, you are not expected to work during your off-hours and cannot be on call, as you are probably not registered as a doctor in Finland and all communication is in Finnish. You can of course join the doctor on duty. You should tell on-call doctor to call you if you wanted to join. I bought myself a local prepaid sim-card, so it would be possible to get in touch with me from the on-call phone (they can't make international calls from it). WhatsApp is widely used by the locals. Replantations and revascularizations tend to happen during evenings (nights) and weekends. Be sure to eat and go to the toilet before severe hand trauma operations, as it's normal for them to last for hours (I think the longest I was at an operation was 12 hours or so). There are so many replantations and revascularizations during my stay in Tays because patients come from any other cities in Finland. I have experienced about 7 times overnight operations of replantations and revascularizations.

Weekends are off and there is totally 12 days off during the period, that you can use on your own will. If you stay with your family in Tampere, you should spend free time for your family. Once I went back to my home country to take part in the annual meeting.

There is a surgical training centre near the hospital, where cadaver courses are held. About 2 times per month (not during the summer and holidays) practical training sessions are held there for hand surgeons. If you have an idea of something you would like to see or do, you have the possibility to go off topic, if there is enough time. And there is a microsurgical course organised several times a year, that you can take part of. In 2020 it cost 1500 euros (might be possible for the hospital to cover the costs). I couldn't take these courses because of COVID-19 situation, however strongly recommend attending, especially, if you don't have that much experience in the field.

You could probably take part in research as well. I wasn't offered to take part in any ongoing projects or start a new one. But I was able to get new ideas of some studies from my colleagues in Tays.

You are expected to join the operations as an assistant basically, and you might be given a chance to perform some operations with a team member. So, you had better see the X-ray or CT about the patients beforehand. In the operating rooms you can speak in English

of course, however you can join the operation more smoothly if you remember some Finnish names of surgical instruments.

As for the bureaucracy, fortunately I could stay in the furnished apartment thanks to my colleague's introduction where located about 3 km far from Tays. Usually I could go to Tays by bike looking nice lake and forest view.

You need Finnish residence permit if you stay over 3 months in Finland (if you come with your family, for all members). It took over 1 month to get cards after my application, I would recommend you check the websites and conditions with time to spare before arriving to the country

The first thing you are going to need is a paper from the hospital stating you are going to work there, the time of employment, working hours and salary. With this you can apply for the ID and tax card (needed for the contract) from Vero (www.vero.fi). And you should create the account of Finnish bank as soon as possible. I created "Nordea bank" account and I could get the salary and pay in some situations using the Nordea net-banking system.

If you are living near by the central city, you can go to Tays by bus. Moreover, you can walk to some beaches and forests within 30 minutes. There are many public saunas because Tampere is sauna capital, so you should experience Finnish sauna and ice-swimming in winter.

You can check some information about Tampere on <https://visittampere.fi>.

Ravintola Nasinneula and Sarkanniemi amusement park, Moomin Museum are my recommendation places for the family with children.

I really experienced in so many fields of hand surgery (upper extremity trauma, rheumatoid hand, reconstructive surgery, brachial plexus injury, congenital and so on...). Moreover, my colleagues and their families gave me so much kindness, spending much private time with them. You are also able to experience stimulating days and change your own view of life!