

VOLUNTEER



Give back, better yourself and overcome your fears

Second Edition, August 2018

Volunteer Profile: Ilmira Murni



1. Hi Ilmira, which year are you in?

Hi! I'm in the 2nd year of the MPharm course.

2. Where did you volunteer and for how long?

I have been volunteering through UCL Hospital Connect since September 2017, but only started doing ward rounds as of January 2018.

3. What do you do as a volunteer? Describe a typical session.

I spend two hours a week within the hospital wards at UCLH. Typically, I come in and ask the nurses or patients whether there is anything that they need help with. Common tasks include fetching water/magazines for patients and supervising those who have a higher risk of falling.

4. What were your first impressions when you started volunteering?

Initially, I had my doubts as to how my role would make a difference because most of the time all I did was talk to patients.

5. How do you feel about the experience looking back at it now?

As time went on, I began to realise that the nurses have a huge workload and require help with certain aspects of their role, in order to have the time to focus on more critically ill patients. Probably around 50% of the patients that I was exposed to were elderly and some patients had dementia. The main task was looking out for these patients, as most of them didn't require urgent medical attention but they were at high risk of falling.

6. What's the best thing about volunteering?

The best thing about volunteering is feeling like you've done something useful for the good of others and it's this feeling that motivates me to continue volunteering. I also really enjoy actively learning through my volunteering experiences which have helped me develop my communication and situational judgement skills.

7. And what's the most challenging thing?

Particularly at the beginning, I found it difficult to start conversations with patients. The more comfortable I grew with the environment, the easier this became.

8. How has volunteering changed you?

I have had a rather sheltered and privileged upbringing in Malaysia. Conversing with patients and learning about other people's life experiences has been very humbling.

9. What difference do you feel you've made by volunteering?

A lot of the elderly patients may have been in the hospital for quite a long period of time and they appreciate having someone look at them as a human being, and not just a patient. Having volunteers on the wards ensures that these patients have someone to talk to and interact with, especially because the nurses are overloaded with higher priority tasks.

10. How has volunteering helped you as a pharmacy student?

It has given me another perspective on healthcare. I think it is often easy to forget about the patient because in our lectures there is a heavier focus on treatments and conditions. Exposure to patients has allowed me to develop my communication skills and this has been very helpful with the OSCEs.

Thank you Ilmira! 😊

If you've been inspired by Ilmira's experience, you can find out more about volunteering with UCL Hospital Connect here: <http://studentsunionucl.org/volunteering/projects/ucl-hospital-connect>