CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Lille Erasmus exchange
Authors	Dablouk, Lena
Publication date	2023
Original Citation	Dablouk, L. (2023) 'Lille Erasmus exchange', UCC Student Medical Journal, Vol. 3, pp. 78-79. https://doi.org/10.33178/SMJ.2023.1.9
Type of publication	Peer-reviewed Article
Link to publisher's version	https://journals.ucc.ie/index.php/smj/article/view/4327/6492 - 10.33178/SMJ.2023.1.9
Rights	© 2023, the Author(s). This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License. - https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0
Download date	2026-10-21 02:11:13
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/16567

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Lille Erasmus Experience

LENA DABLOUK

I never expected my first full-time hospital placement to be in a foreign country where I wasn't completely fluent in the native language. The experience was equally exciting as it was daunting. It definitely brought with it various challenges, however I would absolutely do it again if given the chance.

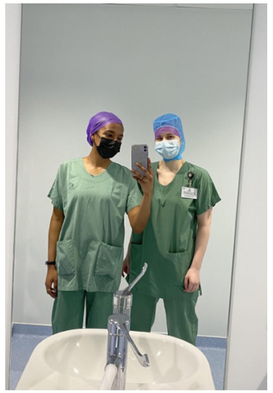
The nerves were high on my first day of placement, so much so that I almost forgot it was my birthday. It was 8am as I walked into the << Hopital Salengro >> and made my way down to the emergency department. I was met by the noise of loud machinery and an overflow of patients being tended to by doctors and nurses. The first difference was immediately evident, the doctors and medical students were wearing white coats, a tradition which we seldom see in our Irish hospitals anymore.

The differences between the Irish and French health systems were unveiled over the next two months. One of the starkest differences is in the medical education system itself, something I noticed from my first day in the hospital. I spent a lot of my days of emergency medicine placement shadowing the << externs >>. These are 4th-6th year medical students who are extremely knowledgeable and carry out a lot of the work as the interns in Ireland do. It was easy to get the senior years mixed up with the doctors themselves, as they were confidently admitting patients and writing up their notes in the charts alone. This trust made for a great learning experience as I eventually got extremely comfortable examining patients and presenting histories back to the doctors. One of the most challenging things to adapt to during my time at the hospital was interpreting charts and getting used to the different medical abbreviations used in France. Although these are second nature when reading a chart here, acclimating to this while in Lille definitely took a few days.

All of the charts in France are electronic, which is something we are yet to see be fully implemented by all departments in Irish hospitals. Patient notes are immediately typed into the computer software instead of being handwritten, allowing patient details to be accessed in any of the hospital departments immediately. This allows for smoother communication between specialties when referring patients. This was especially important in the << Centre Hospitalier de Lille >>, as the hospital complex was made up of ten separate hospitals, with each one containing departments for various specialties.

The weekends were a great time to explore the beautiful city of Lille, which is situated in the North of France, bordering Belgium. This means that Flemish architecture and traditions are prevalent throughout the city, permeating its culture and cuisine. << La Grand Place >> was our usual meeting point, a quaint market square with many restaurants and cafes surrounding it. <<Vieux Lille>> boasts cobblestone streets and red-brick buildings which made for a scenic backdrop every time we explored it. We spent hours in the << Vieille Bourse >>, which was the Old Stock Exchange located in the heart of the city that sells impressive artwork, books and posters.

Once it was time for a snack, we were spoiled for choice: traditional fries in <<Friterie Meuniere>> were always a popular choice. <<Meert>> sells delicious pastries and is located on a picturesque street in the city centre, where the façade alone would grab your attention and entice you to step inside. Here you'll find another one of Lille's delicacies known as <<gaufres>> or waffles, and Charles de Gaulle himself is known to have frequented the store in the past.

My second month was spent in the <<Institut Coeur Poumon>>, which is ranked second in all of France for cardiothoracic surgery. As someone interested in this field, I was extremely excited to spend a full month there. The hospital was extremely modern and students received frequent tutorials and teaching from various members of the team. My first time scrubbing into a surgery was a surreal experience and happened to be during my placement in Lille. I made my way into the <<Bloc Operatoire>> and scrubbed in to watch an aortic valve replacement, where the consultant guided me through the steps and allowed me to assist where possible.

I am extremely grateful to have been given the opportunity to spend two months abroad in the CHU de Lille as part of the UCC Erasmus + programme. The teaching I received over the two months was incredibly valuable, and so were the memories I made during my time there.