US Naval Hospital Yokosuka
Japanese National Physician GME Program
Thank you for your interest in the USNH Yokosuka Japanese National Physician GME Program, also known as the “Fellowship.” Included below is information on the day-to-day experience and what to expect as a Fellow. We recommend participating in the one-week externship or one-day open house if you want to get an even better understanding. You may also email us with any questions. Thank you again for your interest in the program!

**Fellow Expectations and Roles**

Fellows are a critical and integral part of USNH Yokosuka. Since 1952, the Fellowship has forged a partnership between Japanese and American healthcare professionals. The primary mission of the Fellowship is to educate Fellows regarding Western medicine, evidence-based practice, and patient-centered care. A secondary mission is for Fellows to act as a liaison and translator with Japanese hospitals during the transfer of acutely ill American patients that exceed the capabilities of USNH Yokosuka. The liaison role is difficult as it bridges gaps in cultures and standards of care, and it is immensely rewarding to the Fellows and meaningful to the American patients.

**Communication and Cultural Differences**

The staff of the Naval Hospital speak English as do the majority of the patients. Most of the staff will be stationed in Japan for two to three years, during which time some USNH staff take Japanese language courses but few become fluent. Rarely are the USNH physicians proficient enough to communicate patient information in Japanese. Fellows are constantly challenged to speak English as well as understand cultural differences between the Japanese and USNH patients. Military service and family members come from all over the world — not just America—providing significant racial, language, religious, and cultural diversity that you may not be accustomed to practicing medicine in Japan. USNH staff are always available and happy to assist with questions about a particular problem regarding English (conversational, medical, or military.) Although you may question your English ability, you will be pleasantly surprised to see just how quickly your ability improves during your time here.

**Duty**

Also known as "call." Fellows rotate and average duty every sixth day. The Fellow on duty is responsible for translating and assisting with transfer of USNH patients to Japanese hospitals. This responsibility is critical to safe patient care at USNH since Fellows are the link between USNH physicians and Japanese physicians accepting the patient for transfer. Most patient transfers occur during normal daytime business hours. Duty is covered seven days a week, including holidays. Many days there are no transfers, and the Fellow on duty can use this free time to rotate in a clinic, study, or sleep if after hours. Fellows must report to the hospital within 30 minutes if called in for a transfer. Fellows typically reside in the stork’s nest when on duty overnight (discussed below.)
**Procedures**

Although Fellows are not credentialed to independently care for patients at USNH, they are expected to be an active participant when invasive procedures, tests, or drugs are administered to patients. In keeping with the American model of medical education, Fellows are expected to assist or perform procedures under direct supervision of credentialed health care providers in accordance with the laws and regulations of the United States.

**Teaching Conferences and Educational Forums**

The didactics of the USNH Yokosuka Fellowship are one of its greatest strengths. There are several different formats as explained below. Some, such as noon conferences and joint conferences, are Fellow-led whereas others are staff-led or formatted as a group discussion.

**Noon conference**

Noon case presentations take place from 1200 to 1300 on Mondays and Wednesdays and are led by a Fellow. The focus is largely on gathering pertinent historical and physical findings and development of a differential diagnosis as a group in a “morning report” type format. Emphasis will also be placed on interpretation of laboratory and radiological data, and synthesis of all available information to arrive at the correct diagnosis. Staff physicians from various specialties are present to help guide the discussion and education. Fellows present approximately 15 times during the year.
**Joint Conferences**

Joint conferences are an opportunity to formally present cases in English and in front the staff of USNH and a local Japanese hospital. The presentation quality is similar to what would be delivered at an academic conference. USNH and the local hospitals alternate hosting the conferences, and Fellows are expected to present twice during the year. Fellows are expected to thoroughly know these patients and all aspects of their diagnosis in order to field questions from the audience. Presenters will work closely with a USNH attending involved with the case while preparing for the conference.

**Lectures**

USNH staff lectures take place from 1200 to 1300 on Friday. These lectures will reflect core topics in each of the required rotations. Additionally, we will have guest lecturers from subspecialty areas of medicine within USNH Yokosuka, providers from other clinics/hospitals, or visiting Fellowship alumni.

**Morbidity and Mortality**

This monthly case discussion centers on real life complications or adverse outcomes. The discussion is aimed at identifying risks, decision-making, processes, and other factors that contributed to the outcome in order to prevent similar occurrences in the future. The discussion is kept confidential in order to encourage open communication. The format is similar to morbidity and mortality conferences in United States training programs.
Life Support Certifications

Fellows at USNH Yokosuka are required to be certified in Basic Life Support (BLS) and will go through this training shortly upon their arrival. In addition, certification in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS), the Neonatal Resuscitation Program (NRP), and Neonatal Transport Education (STABLE) is available free of charge to all interested fellows.

Rotation Schedules and Curriculum

All fellows will rotate through 6 core departments in the hospital. These are:

- Internal Medicine: 6 weeks
- Family Practice: 6 weeks
- Pediatrics: 6 weeks
- OB/GYN: 4 weeks
- General Surgery: 4 weeks
- Emergency Medicine: 4 Weeks

In addition, fellows will have elective weeks through which they may rotate through specialty departments in the hospital. Some departments are:

- Ophthalmology
- Otolaryngology/ENT
- Orthopedic Surgery
- Neurology
- Dermatology
- Operational Medicine
- “Away Elective”

- Urology
- Radiology
- Anesthesiology
- Psychiatry
- Pathology
- Occupational Health
**Miscellaneous**

**Housing**

Fellows will be provided housing on base in a building called the "stork's nest" next to the hospital. Family members of Fellows are not allowed to reside on base, so Fellows with family will need to find alternate housing off-base. Fellows will still be able to use the stork’s nest while on duty. A housing stipend is available for those living off base.

**On-base Privileges**

Fellows have full access to the base and may come and go freely. They also have access to the Officers’ Club, Purdy Gym, Fleet Recreation Center, base theater, bowling alley, café, restaurants, and base sports fields and courts. If properly registered, the fellows may ride bicycles on the base. Fellows may not register cars on base.

**Military Medicine**

Fellows have the unique opportunity to be involved in disaster drills with the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force and local hospitals. In addition to working as a liaison and translator, Fellows get exposure with dive chambers, medical aircraft, and other specialized medical equipment unique to the military in Yokosuka.

Several times a year American patients are transported back to the United States via a Critical Care Air Transport Team, which convert military aircraft into an intensive care unit on par with hospital based facilities. Fellows are integral to these transfers since the patients are complicated and usually admitted
to a Japanese ICU at time of transfer. Involvement in these cases is highly sought after given the critical condition of the patient and the unique capabilities of the critical care team.