

## **Field Report Clinical Placement Nursing in Svendborg**

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Intensive Care Unit, Hospital of Svendborg, Denmark

Anja Peyer, Bachelor Nursing, 4th year of study

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### **How long can two months be?**

This is an experience of a student from Switzerland, who went to Denmark for a six-week placement and a two-week module at University College Lillebaelt in Odense. It should give you an insight in her experiences.

### **Leaving home**

If you would like to go abroad for studying or a placement you will be never too early to set up plans. I started my preparations in my very first semester at university when I heard about the possibility to go abroad for a placement. This decision made me choose courses taught in English such as cultural understanding, diversity management and joining the winter school of my university.

The first test run I had during European Nursing Module, a mobility program when most of the nursing schools send some of their students to other schools for two weeks. The program is individual from school to school but it gives you an insight what could attend you when you leave for longer. A very good chance if you are not yet sure if an internship abroad is the right thing for you.

After deciding to go to Denmark my university organised the rest until it came to the paperwork.

It seemed to be a huge jungle with questions I could not answer and deadlines I must not miss. I was so worried I could not fight me through but when I made it excitement started to grow. I could not wait for the day of departure, for the adventure to begin.

### **Buddy at your side**

I experienced how helpful a buddy can be. They can provide you with information about how public transport works or where to go out and they are in some ways the first friend you meet in a strange country, you do not know much about. Lucky me I had a buddy taking really care of me. I could ask her when I was facing problems such as getting a monthly train ticket or just to hang out in the evenings.

### **What kept me busy**

On my first Monday I started my clinical placement on an Intensive Care Unit in Svendborg's Hospital. I never worked on an ICU before and I was a little bit worried whether I would be able to handle that many tubes in Danish. Finally, I realized in Denmark almost everybody knows English and I willing to speak and ICU nurses are very merciful. They did not let me alone with the frightening tubes but started to teach me how to handle them. They were very motivated to show me everything ICU has to offer and were willing to answer all me questions.



BUT it was my job to ask and communicate my specific interests. I also experienced helping to change beddings as a door opener. And as most of you know: if you can trust someone in small concerns you can trust them also in big ones. Finally, the nurses taught me how to take arterial blood samples and so on. I could larger my knowledge about nursing theories and skills.

The last two weeks I participated in a module about the chronically ill patient and even though I already had this module it was a nice refresh and a beneficial exchange of point of views related on different cultural backgrounds due to the international mix of the students.

And there were of course the weekends. Time to discover the environment you are placed in. My trip to Copenhagen was just amazing and also the smaller trips to the cities around Odense were worth it.

### **Homesickness a severe disease**

As I mentioned earlier I could not wait for the day of departure. The excitement about all the unknown impressions held three days until I got homesick. It took me about four days to overcome or to reach at least a condition I did not break in tears all the time. Who already experienced this knows how helpless and captured you are in such moments. Who does not know will give me the advice to seek distraction. My advice for those of you who suffer of the same: develop fighting strategies!

I recognized, when I run I do not have the air to cry. This gained me time when I could not cry. Though I needed some motivation to go running twice a week I started to prepare myself for a run I will successfully complete the day after my return.

I had this song (Please tell Rosie by Alle Farben) that just made me feel like dancing and the happy vibes spread immediately to me.

My fighting strategies:

- Do sports!
- Listen to your anti homesickness song!
- Find the place without space for homesickness!

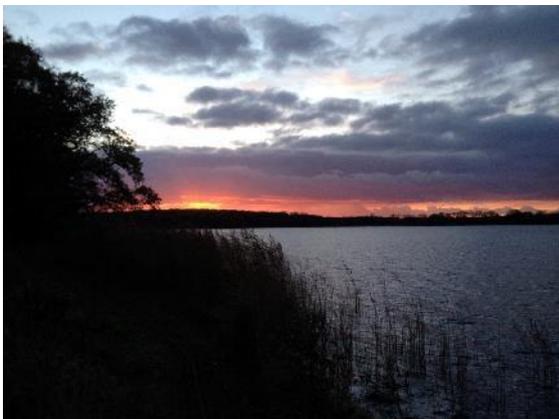
### **My anti homesickness café**

The place without space for homesickness was in my case a little café close to the place I stayed. To go to this café, I had to leave the house, I got a change of tapestry and a good cup of coffee just makes the world a better place.



### **Two sides of the medal**

At the beginning of my stay I regretted my choice to come to Denmark. I could not see the beauty of this country and culture. It took me time to overcome my homesickness to see clear. I think the turning point came when I told my landlady who was also the international coordinator of my university in Denmark about my desperation due to homesickness. From then on I was not alone anymore with this beast and I could start to live.



### **Conclusion**

Even though I had a rough beginning it was hard to leave Denmark again. In the international module I made friends with Danish and foreign students and I could have kept on being hygge (Danish for cosy being together). I would say to moths are enough time to be uncomfortable with the clash of cultures but too short to enjoy enough the feeling of settling down. Anyway, I do not regret I spent two months in Denmark though I

profited in both professional and personal way of my stay.

There would be so many more experiences worth to be written down, but everything ends at certain point.