Chengdu International Pre-Clerkship Elective 2018
Andrea Macikunas, June 2018
Placement: West China Hospital associated with the medical school of Sichuan University, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

Sichuan University is a national university that is consistently top-ranked within China

Many students come from around the country to study medicine here

- 5 year MD: For Chinese students
- 8 year MD: For Chinese students
- 6 year MBBS: International students from South Asia
  - Instruction is in English
West China Hospital

- A network of several hospitals, each with multiple numbered buildings associated with the Huaxi campus of Sichuan University

- Ranked 2nd in China

- Large tertiary care hospital within China
  - 4300 beds and 161,000 surgeries/year
  - Comparison: UH has 380 beds and 36,000 surgeries/year

- Located centrally within Chengdu near Line 1 and Line 3 of the metro
Chengdu, Sichuan Province

- 7th most populous city in China and capital of Sichuan province
- Population: 10.4 million
  - Vs. Toronto: 2.7 million
- Climate: hot and humid
- Very efficient, cheap, and easy-to-use metro system!
Rotations

- **Week 1: Emergency Department**
  - Difficult to find a preceptor with adequate time + English proficiency

- **Week 2: Internal Medicine – Respiratory Diseases**
  - Inpatient and outpatient service
  - Most common: lung cancer, IPF, OSA, and TB

- **Week 3: Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB GYN)**
  - Inpatient and outpatient services including surgery
  - Next year they are moving to a new, bigger hospital in the suburbs

- Other medical students enjoyed Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) rotation. This hospital is also well-known for their robotic surgeries
Things To Do

- Chengdu is known for Sichuan food e.g. Hotpot – spicy but worth trying; also known for relaxed culture of teahouses

- Many temples, monasteries to see within the city

- Giant Panda Research and Breeding Centre
  - Sichuan is the only place in the world you can hold a baby panda!

- Dujiangyan Irrigation System
  - A UNESCO World Heritage Site
Those with a Canadian passport will need a visa to enter China.

- Apply for the visa 1-2 months in advance if possible
  - I got mine within 3 days—but rush service is more expensive
- You will need to go in-person to a consulate.
  - The closest to London is in Toronto and has a very useful website visaforchina.org
- I had an X2 visa for study <160 days, but many other students I spoke to said that a tourist visa would be sufficient

Knowledge of Chinese is very helpful, but there are many English-speaking doctors/students around as well
Most social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) and all Google sites are blocked in China, so if you want to use them you will need a VPN.

I did not use a VPN, but Express VPN was highly recommended.

China has switched almost completely to ‘WeChat’ pay instead of credit or debit. Without a Chinese bank card you will not be able to use this.

You can use cash (there are ATMs everywhere).

Some places will take credit as well.

Bring your white coat! Doctors in Chengdu typically dress very casually (jeans, t-shirt, sandals – and always a white coat).