

Introduction: Medical electives make significant contribution in the training of medical students on healthcare outside their affiliated academic institutions. During this period, learners get exposed to different healthcare systems, diagnostic, medical and surgical techniques as well as appreciate existing challenges. Objective: To assess experiences encountered by medical students during their electives. Methods: A cross sectional study was commissioned among level 5 medical students of University of Nairobi in July 2013. A random sample of 125 students was invited to fill in self structured questionnaires after obtaining informed consent. The questionnaire which had initially been pretested on 25 nursing students comprised bio data, place, duration, funding, experiences and challenges of electives. Data obtained was analyzed using SPSS 20 and computed in terms of frequencies and percentages. Results: There were 76 (60.8% response rate) respondents with majority being males and staying in university hostel. Most of them had undertaken electives in Africa which were organized by themselves and funded mostly by their parents. There was overall positive attitude towards electives with majority (80.3%) claiming it to provide all rounded training. However, financial, transport and language barrier were identified as the main challenges (41.1%, 18.8% and 14.3%, respectively). There was a call by more than 80% of respondents for the university to collaborate with host institutions and provide stipend to cover living expenses mostly. Conclusion: The acquisition of practical skills involved in the treatment of patients forms the basis for high expectation of electives among medical trainees. It is evident that most of the participants would desire the scaling up of entire elective period through institutional collaborations and logistical support.