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Hokkaido University-Chulalongkorn University

International Vet Exchange Program 2024

Achieving Global Standards of Excellence in Veterinary Education

Student Report from
School of Veterinary Medicine,
Hokkaido University
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Project Managers
Chulalongkorn University

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Chisato HAYASHI, 4th year

I joined rotations of cardiology clinic, Feline & Exotic clinic, surgery and rehabilitation, and dermatology clinic in Chulalongkorn University(CU), I gained a lot of precious experiences. I also felt differences between Hokkaido University(HU) and CU. I will mention about Cardiology section as example of clinical rotation. In the cardiology section, there were 10-15 clinical cases per day in 8AM to 4PM, and Dr.Dao taught me how to do examinations /how to understand each result of examinations. In CU, cardiology section was combined with Urology and Diabetic clinic, veterinarians in Cardiology clinic must know about the diseases in the other two sections. MMVD cases were most frequently seen and I saw many cases followed up by checking heart condition using echocardiogram. Physical examinations and other examinations are done as follows; first, checking clinical signs with physical examinations and heart murmur with auscultation. secondly, check presence of atrial and ventricle enlargement, measuring verbosity of regurgitation of mitral valve to categorize into each stage. Also, thickness of each myocardial wall, tricuspid valve regurgitation, degeneration of valves, movement of myocardium with tissue doppler are checked. MMVD is also most common heart disease in dogs in Japan and way of following up cases is also same. It was good opportunity to recheck the symptoms or examination of measuring severeness. In addition to that, I could experience more cases compared to HU. Due to the system of acceptance of medical cases in HU animal hospital, we can only see a few cases per day. However, CU animal hospital accept a lot of cases per day because time spent for one case is shorter than HU and also including simple cases such as vaccination. Through many cases, I can remember what heart murmur of MMVD is like, and how to measure and follow up cases with MMVD.

Although there are a lot of common points, I also found some differences between CU and HU during programs, and I'll show in below. First difference seen in CU was parasitic diseases or infectious diseases such as mosquito and tick-borne diseases or fungal diseases which is not or rarely seen in Japan. I didn't see parasites directly during program, but there are a lot of cases that parasites' test result was positive. Also, due to the high rate of parasitic diseases, parasitic disease tests are commonly used in dairy clinical cases. This was very impressive because relatively few parasitic or infectious diseases are considered as causes of diseases in every clinical case in HU, so there are not enough opportunities to learn about these diseases.

In addition to parasitic diseases, infectious diseases such as Sporotrichosis which is rarely seen in HU are common especially in cats cases in CU and could see many cases during program. We can only see these infectious disease cases in text books and don't have enough time to learn about how to deal with these infectious diseases in HU, so it was important experiences to see real cases and learned how to diagnose or treat these diseases. These experiences would be useful in the future because imported diseases are becoming important by environmental change or increased mobility of animals and human across countries.



USG



cat

Second difference is the time spend for one clinical case and the need of speed. I heard students in CU also required speedy examination and diagnosis during their rotation. This quickness came from the way of case acceptance in CU animal hospital which accept many cases per day. To archive this quickness, veterinarians may need reliable technics and knowledges because there is no time to do unnecessary examinations or wondering long time. We don't have this perspective because HU accept only a few cases per day and there are times to consider well and have many options and cost for examinations so I was very impressed and wanted to refer to it while studying in HU.

Third difference was student-centered examination or medication. Especially in Surgery section, I was surprised by CU students doing most of examinations and diagnosis or anesthesia induction by themselves. Study in CU animal hospital is more practical than HU, 6 grade CU students who already have licenses need to have knowledge or skills to work as a veterinarian in animal hospital. Especially I was taught how important of appropriate food and drinks intake, environment and exercise for heal, and these knowledges are necessary for advising for owners or asking owner's questions. Even though this study is very important, but I thought these points are sometimes not emphasized in clinical rotations in HU. Thorough cases, I realized what should we know and do when we work as veterinarians after graduate.

In addition to clinical rotations, dairy life or weekend trip in Thailand were also very impressive for me. We tried a lot of kinds of Thai traditional foods, enjoyed beautiful scenery and tropical atmosphere, spent great time with friends. We visited Pattaya and nearby Wat-arun and enjoyed beautiful natures like blue oceans, beautiful tropical flowers, visiting zoo, snake farm and temples. Our Thai friend took us many places and gave us wonderful experiences. It was first time to visit Thailand, everything felt fresh and exciting for me. Impressive food during program was matsaman curry and Thai stewed pork and egg which was cooked by our Thai friends' family. It was very delicious and precious experiences, and we also enjoyed great time eating together. Also, friends taught me Thai languages and I could remember a few Thai phrases. I felt communication in Thai language could make me deepen friendship with people in Thailand.

As a conclusion, I learned different knowledge and skills from each rotation, necessary but lacking points in learning in my study, Proactivity of studying and communication with people.

Thanks to people related to this program, I can complete program with getting a lot of precious experiences. Professors and staffs in CU and HU, Prae, Film, Mek, Rawis, and friends we met during this program, Moe and Takuma, I'd like to say thank you to all of you.



friends



Moe DOI, 4th year

In this program, I observed clinical activities in the small animal hospital at Chulalongkorn University. 15 veterinary clinics are located at CU, and each of us selected 4 of them and rotated for 1 week each for a total of 4 weeks. I chose “Feline Center,” “ER (Emergency) Center”, “Urology Clinic”, and “Cardiology Clinic”. After I got to the hospital, I knew that the Urology clinic, Cardiology clinic, Diabetes clinic, and (Endocrinology clinic) were all located on the same floor and staffed by the same doctors. So, I could study more deeply by staying in the same room for two weeks. In addition, I also spent one day each at the Exotic clinic and the Pathology unit in my free time.

In preparation for the visit, we researched and studied about Thailand, attended lectures on English communication skills, and interacted with students from Thailand. In particular, the experience of being able to give presentations in English was effectively utilized in various aspects after the program.

During the first week, I observed the Feline Center. In CU Veterinary Hospital, all initial cases are treated in the Medicine Clinic, and urgent cases are first treated in the ER. Cases assigned to the Feline Center such as “viral infections” and “requests for routine checkups and vaccinations” are the cases that come to the Medicine Clinic, and a few cases of minor illnesses are sent from other specialties. Many cases are follow-up, and the patients have no immediate life-threatening problems. The entire environment, from the waiting area to the examination space and basic laboratory facilities, is dedicated to cats, to minimize the effects of stress on the clinical care of cats. Cats generally exhibit a variety of ailments due to stress. In particular, fever can interfere with vaccination, and TMT can cause cardiomyopathy(HCM), in cats. Hypertension and cardiomyopathy are prolonged and have a significant impact on body condition. I have learned that facilities are necessary components of optimizing feline health and treatment.

The second week, I spent time in the Emergency Medical Center. The most frequent(about 5 to 10 cases per day) procedures were thoracentesis, cardioplegia, and abdominocentesis. The causes varied from injury, FIP (viral infection), chylothorax, and others. In most cases, doctors ordered analyses to find the cause, which was interesting. In addition, there were cases of severe traffic accidents, fights between dogs, and dog and snake bites. And they helped me to feel the differences between the environments of Thailand and Japan. Each of these was seen in at least three cases throughout the week. These were especially urgent cases, and we felt that the ER is an indispensable part of veterinary care in Thailand. In terms of activities, I had many opportunities to work with the nurses, as they always need manpower. It was a very meaningful week for me because I was able to gain on-site knowledge through this experience and learn about the ER system. And because my shifts were longer than those at other clinics, I could spend a lot of time, see many more cases, and interact and talk with more veterinary professionals.



△Interaction with European visitors in the ER

In the last two weeks, I stayed in room 217. 217 room, as mentioned above, is a combined floor with four departments, Urology clinic, Cardiology clinic, Diabetes clinic, and (Endocrinology clinic). The doctor who taught me during my stay in 217 was knowledgeable and energetic in teaching, and I asked countless questions each day. It was a great learning environment. In particular, echo-cardiography knowledge was valuable for me.

I would like to show two points that I felt through this training. First, the importance of subspecialization. As mentioned above, all cases at CU Veterinary Hospital start in the Medicine clinic. The specialization allows each doctor's skills to excel in a more focused way. For example, if an arrhythmia is identified in the ER, as soon as the condition is stabilized, the patient is transported to the Cardiology clinic for a professional echo examination. The ER room has similar echo examination equipment, but the difference between the performers is significant because of the accuracy and speed of the examination. In addition, if a cardiogenic pleural effusion or cardiac effusion is identified, the patient is transported to the ER mainly. This is partly because of the urgency of the situation, but also because ER doctors are more familiar with puncture procedures. As described above, each department has a cooperative system based on a sophisticated sharing system of patient and laboratory information, which supports a broad division of labor. CU Veterinary Hospital is a teaching hospital, and because it is royal, the salary is not particularly high, and many young doctors belong to the hospital. Despite this, the hospital can provide a high level of medical care because of the different specialties of the staff.

Second, I was greatly impressed by the communication skills of the hospital staff, including the students. Having studied veterinary medicine in English, there was no shortage of explanations about case information in English, and there were no barriers in interviewing foreign owners. In addition, more than their English ability, their attitude toward strangers was very friendly.

By putting myself in the position of an international student, I was able to understand foreign students' needs. For example, I enjoyed talking with local people about Thai culture and customs. I also appreciated the introduction of good food, but I would have been happier if they had given me more specific names of restaurants or taken me there with them. These experiences gave me a good opportunity to review my attitude toward foreigners and foreign students in Japan.

Finally, the entire internship was made possible by the cooperation of numerous local people involved, and I received a lot of help and memories from them in my daily life during the month. This was an opportunity for me to try to improve my English communication skills. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all parties for this very valuable experience, which will serve as food for my future studies and life.



△From left to right: “CU animal hospital entrance” and “Stray dogs on the way to school”

Chulalongkorn University (CU) is Thailand's oldest and most prestigious university. We spent 4 weeks there to acquire some knowledge and skills. We chose 4 sections respectively to join during the stay. My choice was as follows; Pathology Unit (week 1), Urology & Cardiology & Diabetic Clinic (week 2), Dermatology Clinic (week 3), and Oncology Clinic (week 4). I'm interested in pathology and wanted to learn that kind of thing, so I chose where I could probably observe some microscopic images.

The first day at CU started with an orientation about the university, the animal hospital, and this program, followed by a brief hospital tour. After the tour, we went to each section to stay in the week (Pathology Unit for me). It was a bit sad that I couldn't participate in the necropsy from the start. Necropsy usually starts at 8:30 am, and the hospital tour finished at about 10:30 am, so the necropsy was almost finished when I went to the necropsy room. They discuss cytology cases after the necropsy (usually in the morning, but that day in the afternoon as they have many necropsy cases on Mondays). In the afternoon, they perform a biopsy, cytology staining, tissue trimming, or weekly presentation depending on the day. I was surprised at how many necropsy cases they had. They had several cases daily, yet we usually have about 3 cases (not sure) a week at HU. During the week at the Pathology Unit, I encountered necropsy of dogs, cats, chickens, ducks, a rabbit, and a porcupine. I heard they even had experienced a shark case (an aquarium called SEA LIFE Bangkok Ocean World is situated near the faculty). I noticed some differences between CU's and HU's Pathology Unit, and the most significant difference was cytology: we usually don't perform cytology for necropsy cases in HU but it's common to perform cytology for necropsy cases in CU. During my stay at CU, I had many opportunities to learn about cytology, which was useful as I knew almost nothing about it. Cytology discussion after the necropsy was mainly on cases from the CU's animal hospital. The most memorable cytology case at the Pathology Unit was Sporotrichosis because, in Thailand, I wanted to see infectious diseases common in tropical regions.

My choice for week 2 was Nephrology, and it was a delightful surprise that Nephrology (Urology) was a part of the Urology & Cardiology & Diabetic Clinic (I will call it "Cardio section") and I could learn cardiology and endocrinology as well as urology there. The Pathology Unit usually doesn't see the owners of animals, on the other hand, in the Cardio section, medical examination always starts from a conversation with an owner. Auscultation follows (I encountered so many MMVD (Myxomatous Mitral Valve Disease) cases there in which a murmur heart sound was often heard), and then blood collection, electrocardiogram, or echocardiogram. I didn't have many chances to observe electrocardiograms. Yet the doctor kindly instructed me for each electrocardiogram case so that I could learn some basics about it. Luckily, I had many opportunities to see echocardiograms. It was a bit tough to read them but I learned much. They sometimes performed urinalysis in this section. Doctors collected urine by bladder puncture, urinary catheterization, or bladder expression, then observed slides stained (Figure 1) or unstained (Figure 2). I remember Figure 1 well because it was probably the first time I learned about caudate cells (inside the square). Caudate cells are a subcategory of transitional epithelial cells and are from deep layers of a bladder, thus their presence indicates damage to the bladder.

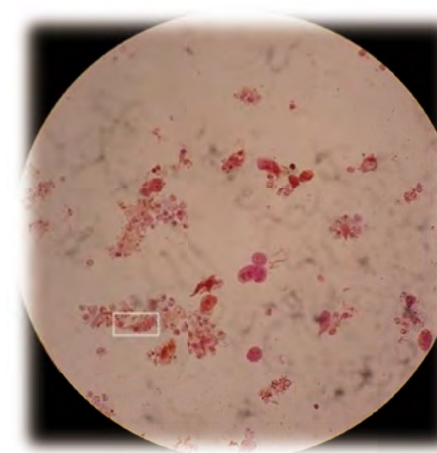


Figure 1. Caudate cell

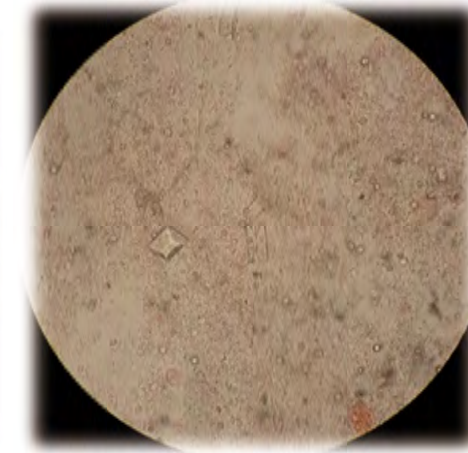


Figure2. Struvite

Week 3 was a week of dermatology. In the Dermatology Unit (Dermato section), Their consultation style was basically the same as that in the Cardio section. The biggest difference should be that doctors risk getting infected by patients there; they paid special attention to Sporotrichosis. I was happy to see many infection cases there, yet infection diseases are not the only thing I learned about there; some skin diseases are associated with immunity, and some with hormones. Here I will write about the most memorable case in this section (a morning case on the last day in Dermato). A female cat (Domestic shorthair) came to Dermato. The doctor talked with her owner and then observed the cat; she had erythematous lesions at the neck, nose, and abdominal areas. He prepared some slides for touch smear cytology and told me I would see eosinophils under the microscope. I wondered and asked him why he knew that. He replied, "Remember, this is a classical lesion pattern of feline atopic skin syndrome". Figure 3 is the microscopic view.

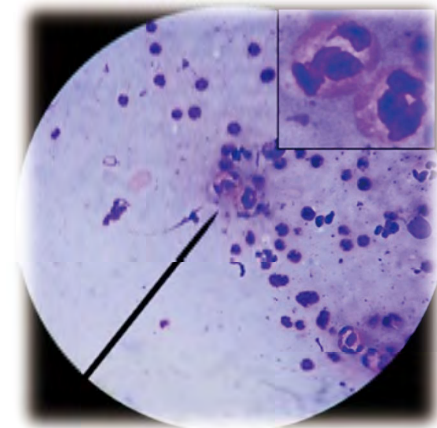


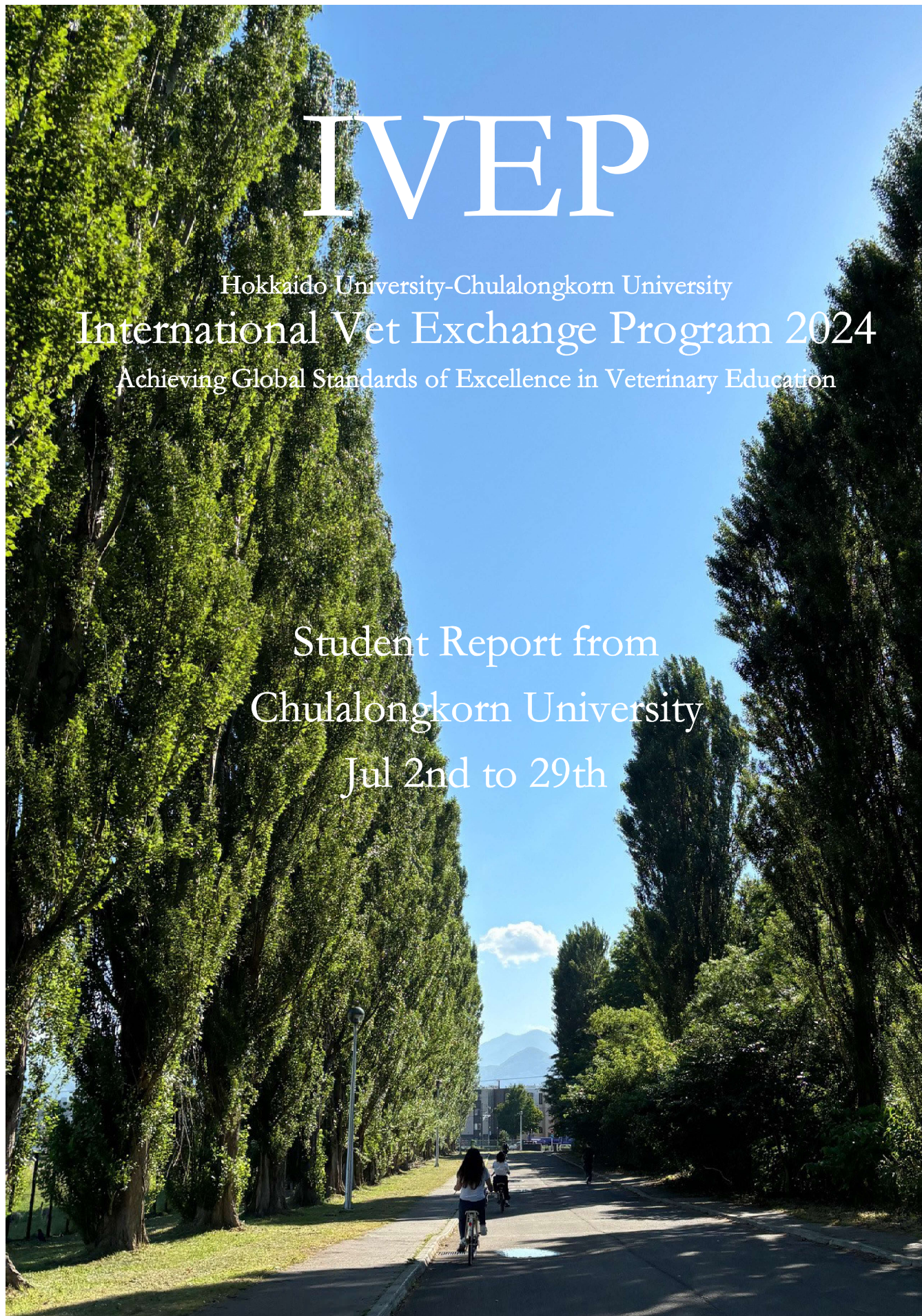
Figure 3. feline atopic skin syndrome case (insert: eosinophils)

Feline atopic skin syndrome is divided into several patterns, each with a characteristic distribution of lesions. This case may be classified as Eosinophilic Plaque and Head & Neck Pruritis. I've heard that the distribution of lesions can be important especially to diagnose skin diseases. What I learned here is the importance of using all the information you have to make a diagnosis.

The last week began with a rush of blood collection. The Oncology clinic is quite busy in the morning as they need to send cases to other sections. Blood collection is for observation or sometimes for diagnosis: They need to check the condition of the patient's liver as some chemotherapy drugs have hepatotoxicity. I saw medical interviews, blood collection, drug injections, and sometimes cytology in this section. Unfortunately for me, we didn't have many cytology cases that week, yet I experienced lymphoma and some other cases. What I remember best is about the diagnosis of lymphoma and reactive lymph nodes: If lymphoblasts account for more than 50%, it is diagnosed as lymphoma, and the main population of reactive lymph nodes are mature lymphocytes and plasma cells. In this section, I also learned much about Thai foods and culture.

It was a memorable trip. I couldn't mention outside the hospital, yet everything there is a good memory. I loved the land, climate, food, culture, and people. I'm grateful to everyone there for everything.

Thank you.



From Chulalongkorn University to Hokkaido Uni

Wichayada Phuvapaisankit (Film), 6th year

My experience in Hokkaido University is around 2-29th of July. In Hokkaido University, there are many laboratories to observe. They also invented tons of innovations to improve humans and animals' quality of life which I found it is interesting. I and my Thai friends went to laboratory rotations on Monday and Friday, about 4-5 labs on one day. During on other weekdays we went to Hokkaido University Veterinary Teaching Hospital. On the first two weeks we were in the 'Internal Medicine' department. We observed lots of how Japanese veterinarian did their job every day from accepting new patient that were all referred from other hospital in Hokkaido and Japan until we do the drug prescription, client communication and planning for further treatment plans with the owner. I also got tons of idea from that department such as, how to communicate with the owners effectively and make them understand about what we were trying to do with their pets. Also, I made some new friends at the hospital too. Japanese friends were very nice even I cannot understand Japanese much, they also helped me with translation every word that I don't understand in Japanese into English. And when we finished the first two weeks at Internal Medicine, we moved to 'Surgery' department. I have seen many new techniques that I have never seen before in my life here. For an example, in Thailand we didn't do much surgery to treat tracheal collapse. But in Japan, they have a surgery called 'PLLP technique' which added the prosthetic loop to help stretch the trachea and make in back in the normal shape.

After class finished on weekdays I and my friends also went to Sapporo almost every day to see the City-Life in Hokkaido. We were fascinating about how nice this city is. The nice weather, nice people and nice food. We have tried lots of Hokkaido food such as soup curry which I find it very delicious. More than that, I went to nice attractions in Hokkaido too. Me and my friends went to Furano to see some lavender when it was the blooming season, then we had lavender ice-cream. We also went to the Furano Winery and Ningle terrace on that day. It was a very tiring day, but I did have a lot of fun! We also went to Fireworks festivals with friends at Sapporo, we bought some food from the convenient store and then eat it while we were waiting for the fireworks. It was worth for the wait! This was a great opportunity of my life here for me to come to study in Japan. I really like everything here and I will come back to Hokkaido again if I have any chances and I am surely will not forget anything that I experienced in Hokkaido during July. It was the best month of the year for me !



From Chulalongkorn University to Hokkaido Uni

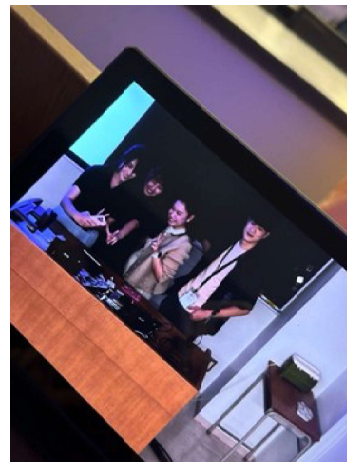
Rawissara Niwattananun (Rawis), 6th year

My experience during the veterinary co-operative study program at Hokkaido University was both enriching and transformative. I spent two weeks in internal medicine and two weeks in surgery, gaining exposure to advanced practices and complex cases that deepened my understanding of veterinary medicine.

In the internal medicine rotation, I participated in morning ward rounds, where I learned about the detailed process of diagnosing and treating cases. Since Hokkaido University accepts only referral cases, the complexity of the cases I encountered was significantly higher than what I had previously experienced at Chulalongkorn University. This provided me with a unique opportunity to enhance my diagnostic skills. I was actively involved in physical examinations, animal restraint, and even prostate gland palpation, which were critical in shaping my hands-on experience. A particularly valuable aspect of my time in internal medicine was the opportunity to learn more about the interpretation of CT scans and MRIs. These imaging techniques are routinely used at Hokkaido University, unlike in my home institution, and I was able to observe and understand their application in diagnosing various conditions. Despite the language barrier, the professors, clinicians, and Japanese students were incredibly supportive, always making an effort to ensure I understood the procedures and concepts being discussed.

The surgery rotation was equally impressive. I engaged in morning rounds, observed surgeries, and assisted with drug preparation. The surgical facilities at Hokkaido University are highly modern, and I was particularly struck by the advanced operative setups, such as automatic sensor doors, surgical camera systems, and specialized surgical room lighting. These technologies, which are not available at my university, significantly enhance the efficiency and safety of surgical procedures. Observing the meticulous care and precision with which surgeries were conducted broadened my perspective on veterinary surgery and highlighted the importance of an advanced surgical environment.

Beyond the clinical experience, I also had the opportunity to explore Hokkaido's cultural and natural beauty. A field trip with professors and Japanese friends allowed me to visit Furano, Ningle terrace, a cheese factory, the historical village, and the Hokkaido museum. These excursions provided a deeper appreciation of Japan's rich history and vibrant culture, complementing my academic experience. Overall, my time at Hokkaido University was profoundly impactful. The advanced medical practices, supportive environment, and cultural exposure exceeded my expectations and left me with unforgettable memories. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to study at such a prestigious institution, and I am confident that the knowledge and skills I gained will greatly benefit my future career in veterinary medicine.



From Chulalongkorn University to Hokkaido Uni

Kunanon Rojratanaichai (Mek), 6th year

The International Vet Exchange Program, or IVEP in short, is a program in which Hokkaido University and Chulalongkorn University cooperate with each other for the sake of illustrating an exchange program between two universities. I, Kunanon Rojratanaichai, am one of the exchange students from Chulalongkorn University, and this is the journey of my life in the International Vet Exchange program.

My tasks during the program were to observe and discuss cases. Moreover, I got a chance to assist other students and veterinarians with animal handling and a couple of equipment preparations. My first two weeks started with a medicine rotation in which many difficult and complicated cases were being checked and treated, followed by a surgical rotation for two weeks. To conclude, I spent about 4 weeks at Hokkaido University.

Internal medicine began in the morning, where I joined the case rounding, which concluded the case that was discharged. I learned a lot about how different cases were approached and treated. When the rounding was finished, a new case was admitted into the hospital, and a checkup was done on the animal. Even though surgery is in a different section from internal medicine, the work flow is similar to medicine. The morning started with a rounding, followed by patient administration and surgery. Numerous surgical techniques had been observed, including cases discussed in surgery, resulting in improvement of my surgical knowledge during my exchange year.

Knowledge was the most crucial acquisition during my stay. I had learned things that cannot be found in Thailand and acquired techniques that were not taught in Thailand. Although the language barrier was one of the biggest obstacles during the program, I persevered. All of these were due to support from all of the professors at Hokkaido University who helped us go through the exchange program.

Knowledge was not the only thing I achieved from the exchange program. Numerous Japanese acquaintances were connected during the month. All of them assisted me in many ways, including language translation and case discussions. Furthermore, my Japanese skill improved by a mile along the program, thanks to all the conversation and traveling that were done during the month with my Japanese friends. As a result, my language skills improved significantly during the exchange program.

In conclusion, the International Vet Exchange Program helped me grow as a person while also aiding me in maturing as a full-fledged veterinarian. It is all thanks to this marvelous exchange program that opened an opportunity for me to study in a foreign country. With this in mind, I will utilize all of my knowledge and skills during the exchange program for the best of animal health.



From Chulalongkorn University to Hokkaido Uni

Praeploy Buamun (Prae), 6th year

During my exchange program at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Hokkaido University from July 2nd to July 29th, 2024, I had the privilege of experiencing both the academic rigor and the cultural richness of Japanese veterinary education. As a 6th-grade student from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, I was eager to broaden my knowledge and gain hands-on experience in a different academic environment.

The program was structured to provide a comprehensive understanding of veterinary medicine, with the first two weeks dedicated to internal medicine rotation and the last two weeks focused on surgery rotation. During the internal medicine rotation, I had the opportunity to work alongside experienced veterinarians, learning to diagnose and manage various medical conditions in animals. This exposure was invaluable, as it deepened my understanding of internal medicine, particularly in areas such as cardiology, hematology, and gastroenterology. The surgery rotation was equally enriching, where I observed in various surgical procedures. I learned the importance of precision, teamwork, and techniques in ensuring successful surgical outcomes. The hands-on experience I gained during this rotation significantly improved my surgical skills and reinforced my interest in pursuing a career in veterinary surgery.

In addition to the clinical rotations, I participated in 16 different laboratories covering a wide range of subjects, including anatomy, physiology, molecular medicine, experimental animal medicine, public health, pharmacology, comparative pathology, veterinary hygiene, theriogenology, infectious disease, microbiology, radiation biology, toxicology, biochemistry, and parasitology. Each laboratory provided a unique perspective on veterinary medicine, and I was able to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings. The multidisciplinary approach helped me to appreciate the interconnectedness of different fields within veterinary science.

Reflecting on my experience, I am deeply impressed by the high standards of education and the dedication of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Hokkaido University. The opportunity to learn in such a dynamic and supportive environment has been a turning point in my academic journey. I feel that I have grown both professionally and personally through this exchange program. My clinical skills, especially in internal medicine and surgery, have improved significantly, and I am more confident in my abilities as a future veterinarian. This experience has not only expanded my knowledge but also strengthened my passion for veterinary medicine. I am grateful for this opportunity and look forward to applying what I have learned to my studies and future career.

