

Interview with Johnny:

A resident specialist surgeon who lives and works at the hospitals campus

Theresa Selent: *Hi Johnny, tell me who you are.*

Johnny: Hi, so I'm Jonny. I'm a resident surgeon in trauma & orthopaedics. Well, I'm a specialized surgeon but then I'm doing a fellowship in trauma & orthopaedics and I actually enjoy it.

Theresa Selent: *Cool. And why are you in Ghana?*

Johnny: Right, so I'm a mixed race. My dad is from Ghana, my mum is Russian and I don't know, thinks turned out I'm in Ghana at the moment, so it is was it is.

Theresa Selent: *And how did you pick Kumasi?*

Johnny: Mh, I like Kumasi. I think it's a very pleasant city. It's cool, it's cooler than Accra, the weather is nicer, the people are nicer as well, it's smaller too. So I think from an academic stand of point and just for living experiences I think it's a nice base to be.



Theresa Selent: *Okay. Where do you consider your home to be?*

Johnny: Well, in Ghana?

Theresa Selent: *No, just in general.*

Johnny: I don't know. I'm a person of the world. I've been to several countries and I - like I said - I'm from a mixed heritage so at the moment I'm here. This is okay. This is what I consider home for now.

Theresa Selent: *Good. Do you ever have such a feeling about feeling homesick?*

Johnny: So when you're homesick after travelling, the place you're homesick for is where you consider home. Mh, I don't know. I think home is more a place I have within. It's when I'm peaceful. It's when I'm restful. It could be anywhere really. But when I have that assemblage of peace and being restful, then I'm home. It could be anywhere. I'm very adaptable. So, some people adapt to lots of food. I can adapt to lots of places.

Theresa Selent: *How do you feel about living on this campus area. This very enclosed place where the hospital is the centre but then there is so much around. How do you feel about that?*

Johnny: For me it's pretty good because I'm close to the hospital. In my line of work I get called in the middle of the night, especially when I'm on duty and it's very convenient and it's safe as well. So there's also the chance to interact with a lot of fellow colleagues and students and that's good as well. You really want that intellectual stimulation. You don't feel isolated.

Theresa Selent: *Apart from it being practical, does this campus have a meaning to you?*

Johnny: I have a soft spot for the hospital. I've been to the bigger one in Accra and I've spent three years there. I think I like this place better because people are more friendly and also it's a more embraced environment, more welcoming.

Theresa Selent: *Did you spend your entire professional career in Ghana so far?*

Johnny: No. I've had internships in the U.S. and I studied in the UK as well as a part of my training.

Theresa Selent: *So you're a fully trained surgeon. Where did you do your surgery training?*

Johnny: I started in Accra and then I continued here.

Theresa Selent: *Do you want to stay here in Kumasi?*

Johnny: Well as a surgeon I enjoy what I do and I get a chance also to get a lot of hands-on experience here. I know surgeons that come from Germany and I know they don't get a hands on as we do here and then there are responsibilities I have here as well and so. That means in my training I get to be exposed to far more cases than the average person who did my level elsewhere and also that means I'm basically more confident and more confident. So for now it's okay but you never know what the future brings.

Theresa Selent: *Do you have a certain place where it draws you to apart from this hospital? Where you say 'Oh, I really would like to work there or live there'?*

Johnny: From a professional standpoint one wants to feel fulfilled. One wants to feel that he's in the best possible place so there's always that draw. Yeah, there are a few nice facilities out there. There is one in Accra. The Spinal Orthopaedic Centre which is really good as well. So at the moment I'm okay here but like I said you never know what the future brings and what opens up. Anywhere where I feel fulfilled and happy that's the place for me.

Theresa Selent: *I think for medical people who love doing their job sometimes it's not important where it is exactly but what the hospital is offering you is how you can fulfil your medical goals. Is that the same for you?*

Johnny: Yes, yes, yes. For me, one of the things that make me happy is the opinion of my patients. And as long as they are happy and as long as I'm happy doing my job that's important. There is also the fact of money but that's secondary. I think personal happiness is important because you got to enjoy what you do. So you're absolutely right. You will enjoy your job more if you're happy where you are and plus our job is very difficult. Sometimes you work 24 hours, 36 hours in the hospital. If you are undedicated to it, if don't enjoy what you're doing, it will be very difficult for you to sustain it.

Theresa Selent: *Are you happy with coming to Ghana and working here?*

Johnny: It has its challenges. For now I'm okay. Like I said the hands on experience is really good. There are some things I wish would be better. I wish we had some more equipment to make the job easier. In my line of work we fix fractures, so you have a patient who comes in and I'd love to treat him on that same day. Just to have the operating theatre space, just to have the equipment to be able to work. But sometimes it is a big challenge because the patients have to pay for the implants and they are quite expensive. And also the challenges in the theatre, getting into the theatre space,

sometimes are difficult. So we can't do the cases I really want to. So I wish that would be different. So there are a few challenges but it could be worse. I'm more like "the glass is half full" kind of person. I try to be more optimistic and hopeful.

Theresa Selent: *That's good. Do you have my international friends and colleagues?*

Johnny: I do, I do. We get a lot of visitors from the U.S. from outside. Yes, I think it's also very important to collaborate because medicine is constantly changing. They are bringing new ideas in and it's very important to be able to maintain that. You have to develop professionally and then as an individual you get to meet different people. Meeting people and being able to relate to them means that you're more grounded and more rounded as an individual. You get more social skills and I think that's important. And people from different backgrounds as well. I think there is a lot of international exchange going on here and that is a good thing.

Theresa Selent: *Well, thanks Johnny for the Interview! That's it!*