

### **Dominic's summer placement**

As a third year medical student, Dominic was delighted to get a summer observership placement with UNICEF. He was surprised to find himself sent to Nigeria to work on a polio vaccination programme, as before this he had believed that polio had been eradicated globally. He was shocked to see the effects of polio first hand, particularly as the patients were usually children and he worked hard at his duties supporting the team, determined to do his bit to make a difference.

When he returned to London at the end of his placement Dominic made sure that he visited the Science Museum to learn all he could about the cause, transmission and management of the disease as well as the methods used to eradicate it from most of the world. He was also fascinated to talk to his aunt who, as a child, had been one of the first to be vaccinated in the UK. Her best friend had contracted polio and had spent the rest of her life in an iron lung because her parents had declined vaccination for their daughter – Dominic was interested to explore the reasons that led people to decline vaccination and to compare them to reasons given by a few of the people he had met in Nigeria. He found it difficult to believe that some people would neglect to take protection against such a serious medical condition.

About 10 days after getting back to the UK, Dominic started to experience flu-like symptoms and he realised, with some dismay that he'd been so busy and so engrossed in his work that he'd completely forgotten to take his doxycycline tablets. He suspected that he had contracted another disease endemic in Nigeria and through large parts of the world - a suspicion which was subsequently confirmed by a blood test.