IBRA International Bone Research Association

NHS Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

IBRA fellowship report

Name: Dr. Siew Khei Liew
Country of Citizenship: Malaysia
Training center: Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, London, United Kingdom.
Fellowship director: Mr. Lorenzo Garagnani
Fellowship Type C, Research topic: Piezoelectric Bone Surgery: A High Precision, Soft Tissue Sparing Approach in Hand and Wrist Surgery
Date: 1 Oct 2021 – 31 Dec 2021

What were your professional and personal expectations of the scholarship?

My expectations of the scholarship were to explore new surgical skills and techniques that are not routinely performed in my home country and to experience different working environment and culture in an established renowned healthcare system.

What is the main focus of the IBRA training centre (in general and of the department) you assisted in?

Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust provides services in Guy's Hospital, St. Thomas' Hospital and Evelina London Children's Hospital. The team that I assisted focus on hand and wrist elective cases in Guy's Hospital, which include bone and joint corrective surgery, degenerative diseases, and nerve entrapment syndromes. In St. Thomas' Hospital, the focus was on acute hand and wrist trauma, including fractures and dislocations. The focus in Evelina London Children's Hospital was mainly congenital hand anomalies and paediatric hands conditions. This IBRA training centre has a comprehensive hand and wrist service which is ideal for fellowship in hand and wrist.

What did you do during your scholarship/how were you incorporated in the training centre's daily routines/activities?

During my stay I joined the team in their busy schedule running services in all three hospitals. On top of hand and wrist clinics, I had the opportunity to participate in a unique Congenital Upper Limb and Hand Anomalies Clinic (CULHA) where a Paediatric genetics consultant Dr Holder, Mr Garagnani, and a trained paediatric hand occupational therapist assess and treat patients along with their family. This was my first experience in such setting and learned about the importance of genetic counselling and multidisciplinary approach in congenital hand anomalies.

The team has weekly discussion with the plastic surgeons on the management of interesting and complicated cases and once a fortnight radiological conference with the radiology team on interpretation of ultrasound, MRI, and CT scans.

I have assisted in 70 surgeries ranges from simple to complex cases in adult and paediatric upper limbs. Proximal interphalangeal joint arthroplasty, trapeziectomy and partial trapezoidectomy with abductor pollicis longus suspension, fragment specific distal radius plating, opponenplasty with ulnar collateral ligament of metacarpo-phalangeal joint reconstruction, Dupuytren's fasciectomy and dermatofasciectomy were among those I have learned new tips and pearls here and will definitely be adopted into my current practice.

Piezoelectric surgery was a new concept introduced to me in this centre. We have used Piezoelectric instruments in various surgeries and its benefits of high accuracy, surrounding soft tissue preservation, continuous irrigation of osteotomy site to minimise debris and heat necrosis makes it an ideal tool in hand and wrist surgery. This technology has yet to be available in my home country, but this experience gave me confidence to utilise it in the future.

What was the most significant personal experience of the scholarship for you?

This was an amazing experience to work with experts from different countries and cultures. Different technical approach in problems solving and perspectives in disease pathology seen here were invaluable in my career.

Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust is located in the heart of London with easy access to public transport (tubes and buses). I would recommend this training centre to future scholars as this is a great place for training as well as to experience the colourful life of London.

I would like to thank IBRA Upper Limb Education Committee for this opportunity and arrangement. My gratitude to fellowship director Mr Lorenzo Garagnani, Mr Sam Gidwani and their team members for their knowledge sharing and remarkable hospitality.

From the left. Mr. Lorenzo Garagnani, myself, Ms. Suan Khor.

In Congenital Upper Limb and Hand Anomalies Clinic (CULHA) combined clinic with Mr. Garagnani (left first) and Dr. Holder (left second).