IBRA Scholarship Report

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Training center: ***Prof. Rames Mattar Jr***

Hand and Microsurgery Group of Institute of Orthopeadic and Traumatology Medical School of University of São Paulo, Brazil

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First of all I would like to thank IBRA for the opportunity of this fellowship and Prof. Rames Mattar Jr and his group for making my stay an unforgettable experience with a great professional and personal benefit.

Professional experience:

I spent 3 weeks with the group of Hand and Reconstructive Microsurgery under supervision of Prof. Rames Mattar Jr. The group consists of about 20 staff members and 8 hand fellows. Doctors usually combine private and public practice at the IOT. There are at least 3 staff members present at the department every day.

The main interest of the group is acute and chronic brachial plexus surgery, tetraplegic patients, congenital pathologies of the upper extremity, all types of flaps, free muscle transfers and complex injuries including macroreplantations.

My day used to start at 7 in the morning. On Monday mornings the day starts with a visit to admitted patients, On Wednesdays and Fridays there are scientific and fellow reunions. The OR Program starts at 7 in the morning as well. Fellows are in charge of outpatient clinics with the consultant coming in the afteroon to help with the most difficult cases.

In the OR I had an opportunity to see a large amount of complex surgeries such as brachial plexus explorations, many types of nerve and tendon transfers, procedures in congenital deformities, local flaps, free flaps and free muscle transfers as well. Amongs the acute cases I would highlight complex injuries of the hand and replantations. Common hand procedures and arthroscopies were usually performed in private hospitals. I was offered to come and see these procedures as well. Thanks to this experience I could compare public and private health care system. I could see there was a huge difference between these two types of hospitals.

As an example of the high quality of microsurgeons in this group I would like to mention living donor liver transplants in childern. Twice a week two microsurgeons of this group take part in liver transplantations being responsible for the arterial microanastomoses. I could admire skills of these orthopaedic surgeons performing microsurgery on the moving surgical field while standing.

The microsurgery laboratory is a place where the fellows can train microsurgery skills. I was very excited to get a complex training under supervision of Dr. Gustavo , responsible for the micro lab. I went through a learning process starting on the surgical gloves ending up with micovascular procedures in rats.

Personal experience:

The Brazilian hospitality was something very special to me. Even if I could see how busy person Prof. Rames is, he always made time to answer all my question and help me with my issues. We even managed to spend couple evenings together with his family and the members of the group. I must mention the exciting weekend on the beach with Dr. Raquel and her amazing family. We had a great communication in our Whatsapp group so I was informed about all the cases and could come to see the most interesting emergency surgeries during night shifts.

Sao Paulo is an enormous city. Despite my initial worries I fell in love with the city. The quarters around the hospital of Las Clinicas are residential, modern parts of the city with bunch of design boutiques and stylish coffee shops. Even the air in the city was very fresh without any significant pollution. I had no security issue during my stay. Nevertheless it is neccesary to follow some basic precautions. Sao Paulo is definitely the best place to eat and to go out.

Summary:

I must say that the fellowship overpassed all my expectations. From professional point of view it would be hard to find any other group with so many complex and microsurgical procedures.The cordiality of the group made my stay very pleasant time during which I felt to be a welcomed part of the team. I have found many new friends among the staff members and fellows.

I do highly recommend Hand and Microsurgery Group of IOT to anyone interested in high-level microsurgery and complex hand surgery cases.

I can´t imagine getting more benefiits out of my stay from profesional, personal and cultural point of view.

I would love to thank IBRA, Prof. Rames and his group one more time for this unforgettable experience.

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