

TWJ Short Fellowship Report

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This report covers my 2 week short fellowship to Nijmegen. The first week was part of the famous Ear Surgery Course, now in its 53rd year! The second week consisted of a clinical observership.

53rd Nijmegen Ear Surgery Course

Like most otologists I have attended several ear surgery courses, but this one was head and shoulders above the rest! The days were intense starting at 8am, finishing after 6pm. Most days ended with a course dinner or lecture where further discussion around otological techniques, different healthcare systems, Manchester United and the meaning of life continued into the night (usually in that order).

The course was attended by about 25 delegates from close to 10 different nations, including ones in Africa. This added to the international feel of the discussions and revealed how different nations would treat the same pathology.

The invited faculty comprised otology heavyweights from the UK and Europe including Professors Saeed, Huttenbrink, Caye-Thomasen, Falcioni, Somers and Aschendorff. The local faculty led by Dr Jeff Mulder were equally brilliant in imparting their knowledge and experience to the visiting delegates.

The course was broken into interactive live surgery, lectures and tutorials, and temporal bone drilling (in a fantastic dissection facility with 2 bones per delegate). Pretty much every aspect of otology and skull base surgery was covered in the 5 days. Spending most of your waking hours with fellow otologists and experienced otology Gurus was an enjoyable experience and I took away plenty of learning points and tips that will improve my practice back in the UK. The final session of the course was devoted to cases that delegates wished to present. I took the opportunity to discuss an ongoing interesting case of mastoiditis with an intracranial complication and sigmoid sinus thrombosis I had managed just the week prior to attending the course.

Observership at the Radboud University Medical Centre

Dr Jeff Mulder the course director had orchestrated an impressive course and had also arranged our observership week. Along with a senior ENT registrar from the UK, Nick Dawe, I attended daily theatre sessions with different faculty members. The last day was spent with the audiologists seeing cochlear implant patients. We attended theatre sessions with Dr Mulder, Dr Pennings and Dr Waterval who were extremely welcoming and interactive while performing the operations. They also took time to translate from Dutch into “Dinglish” as they called it when needed! This added significantly to the learning experience. It was also interesting to observe how a well-funded health system operates. The UK could certainly learn a thing or two about the Dutch model of health care delivery.

I would like to conclude by thanking the faculty and residents at the Radboud UMC for their kindness and hospitality during my time with them. Finally, I would like to convey my gratitude to the TWJ Foundation for awarding me this prestigious fellowship. I have returned to the UK with fresh ideas and new techniques that I can implement in my practice to benefit my patients and future trainees.



Nick Dawe, Jeff Mulder, Anand Kasbekar in Clinic



In the operating theatre coffee room



With Ronald Pennings



With Jerome Waterval