

TWJ Clinical Fellowship in Otology/Neurotology Report

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It is with great pleasure that I report on my six month fellowship in Otology and Neurotology at the University Health Network in Toronto. I am very grateful to the TWJ Foundation Trustees for awarding me this prestigious opportunity and to Professor John Rutka for the unique and invaluable experiences this Fellowship provided.

Professor Rutka has been a proud TWJ mentor to many UK trainees. Over the years he has developed a comprehensive, multifaceted program involving collaborations with colleagues both within and beyond the University Health Network allowing the Fellowship to be individually tailored. I had the privilege of working with Dr Jerry Halik and Dr David Pothier. For me the highlights of my training were in medical neurotology, stapedectomy and exposure to endoscopic ear surgery.

The majority of my time was spent at Toronto General Hospital. In my initial 3 months I spent four days per week in clinic and one day per week in the operating room. Many of the clinic patients present with dizziness, the most complex patients being assessed in the award winning "Hertz Multidisciplinary Neurotology Clinic". Referrals are received from all over Ontario. As well as 2 neurotologists the clinic is staffed by a neurologist (Dr Ranalli), a vestibular psychiatrist (Dr Gerretsen), a vestibular physiotherapist (Ms Sulway), a research nurse (Ms Dillon), along with Fellows and Residents from a variety of specialities, and with audiology support. The team discusses all patients, providing a fascinating insight into the assessment and management of the dizzy patient, from which I have learnt a vast amount. I was fortunate to be able to spend time in the Centre for Hearing and Balance Testing, where advanced tests offered include vHIT and scleral search coil. In the operating room I advanced

my skills in middle ear and mastoid surgery. Advanced surgery included a translabrynthine vestibular schwannoma resection, labyrinthectomy, facial nerve decompression and CSF leak repair. Dr Pothier provided enthusiastic teaching in endoscopic ear surgery.

In the second 3 months I was seconded three days per week to work in Markham Stouffville hospital with Dr Jerry Halik. From this community hospital Dr Halik runs one of Canada's busiest otologic practices with a prolific stapes surgery experience. In my short time there I added over 30 stapedectomies to my logbook.

One of the unique strengths of the Fellowship is the opportunity to see how health care is delivered outside the major city. Once per month I was able to accompany Professor Rutka to Niagara Falls where a specialist neurotology clinic service was provided to the residents. There was also a trip to Sioux Lookout, Northern Ontario where a small, General Practitioner run hospital provides high quality care to many underserved First Nation communities. We visited Dryden (a small industrial city) on 2 occasions delivering general ENT outpatient and surgical care. Dr Rutka very generously funded these trips and made sure that whilst away we experienced as much of Canadian hospitality as possible. This ranged from culinary delights such as Perogies and butter tarts, to activities such as dog sledding, "sauna bathing", and zip lining!

Back in Toronto General Hospital there were ample educational opportunities. Every Friday morning Grand Rounds was presented by a series of renowned ENT surgeons from all over North America. Neurotology Rounds occurred monthly. Attendance at meetings was encouraged. The Percy Ireland Academic Day showcased activity in otolaryngology across the University of Toronto. I attended the Canadian Society of Otolaryngology meeting in Winnipeg where work on a 28-year mastoid surgery review was presented. I was funded to participate on the 5th Toronto Endoscopic Ear Surgery course, with international faculty members from the International Working Group on Endoscopic Ear Surgery.

As well as learning a tremendous amount, I made some great friends and had amazing fun in Toronto. It is a vibrant and multicultural city. Throughout my time away Professor and Mrs Rutka were incredibly kind and hospitable to myself, my husband and my two children. I would like to thank both the TWJ Foundation and Professor Rutka for an experience I will never forget. I will endeavour throughout my career to use my experience to deliver the highest quality care to my patients.