

CWJ Short Fellowship Report

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I was honoured to be awarded the opportunity to attend the 57th Nijmegen Ear Surgery Course with a subsequent observership at the Radboud University Medical Centre, thanks to the generosity of the TWJ foundation. The first week was the course and the following week, the observership.

Week one: The Course

The course comprised five intensive days. Mornings featured lectures and live surgeries, while afternoons were dedicated to the dissection lab, where each participant conducted supervised dissections of two temporal bones. Eminent surgeons presented lectures on key topics, offering insights into a wide range of pathologies with substantial depth and breadth. In addition to the local faculty, Professor Saba Battelino (Slovenia), Dr. Thomas Somers (Belgium), Dr. Maurizio Falcioni (Italy), Professor Shakeel Saeed (UK), Professor Thomas Zahnert (Germany), and Professor Per Caye-Thomasen (Denmark) brought valuable insight into the management of both routine and more complex otological pathology. The live-streamed surgeries, enhanced by 3D glasses, provided a unique opportunity to observe multiple cases during the week. Delegates could communicate with the operating surgeons via the faculty in the viewing room while enjoying live commentary. The cases included combined approach tympanoplasty with obliteration, management of the unstable mastoid cavity, stapes surgery, OSIA, cochlear implantation, subtotal petrosectomy, ossiculoplasty, excision and grafting of ear canal stenosis, middle fossa approach to CSF leaks and more. This was an invaluable experience that will no doubt have an impact to my surgical practice and approach to cholesteatoma management. Particularly interesting were the obliteration techniques and their improved outcomes which are routinely performed in both Nijmegen and Belgium.

Following the course, dinners offered great opportunities to network with the faculty and other delegates. The Brinkman Lecture was held on Wednesday evening by Professor Per-Caye Thomasen, who spoke about his career in hearing research and novel gene therapy.

Week two: The observership

This was a unique opportunity to experience tertiary level otology outside of the UK. The dedication of the consultants to teaching and sharing their experiences was particularly noteworthy. I observed outpatient consultations and attended various theatre lists, where I had the chance to witness combined approach tympanoplasty, canalplasty, and cochlear implantation. The theatre environment was relaxed, fostering discussions about surgical techniques, decision-making during surgery, and the challenges associated with obliteration techniques.

Overall, the experience was fantastic. The entire hospital team and course faculty made us feel welcome. I made lifelong friends and contacts and would like to extend a big thank you to the Radboud UMC team. I look forward to seeing them again at future courses and conferences.

