

# **TWJ Short Fellowship Report**

**Radboud University Medical Centre, Nijmegen, Netherlands – February 2019**

**Mr Nikul Amin, ST8 South London Trainee**

I was lucky enough to be appointed to the two-week TWJ Short Fellowship at Radboud University Medical centre in Nijmegen. This consisted of the following:

## **Week 1 – The 54<sup>th</sup> Nijmegen Ear Surgery Course**

This 5-day course is attended by an international group of delegates as well as some of the most eminent faculty from across Europe. The course is situated in the beautiful town of Nijmegen which is easily accessible from both Amsterdam and Brussels. The hospital sits within the university campus and gave us all an opportunity to see healthcare delivery in a different setting to the UK.

As a trainee otologist, this course is renowned for teaching the most up-to-date surgical techniques and the team members are leaders within the speciality.

The 5-day course consisted of long days with lectures, live demonstrations of surgery and temporal bone dissection. The lectures were provided by leaders in their respective field of interest and were interactive throughout.

The live surgical demonstrations were brilliantly set out with 3D glasses provided to allow the delegates a real understanding of surgical orientation. Throughout the surgery there was an audio link to the operating surgeons whereby the delegates could ask questions to allow us to gain in-depth comprehension of the reasoning behind their decision making. I picked up on lots of surgical pearls of wisdom based on their vast experience.

Despite the long days, we were very well-fed and had lots of short breaks to allow us to gather our thoughts as well as have the opportunity to meet the surgeons and discuss the cases with the other delegates. I particularly enjoyed learning about complex reconstruction and mastoid obliteration techniques aimed at reducing recurrence of cholesteatoma.

During the temporal bone dissection, we had the expert faculty to guide our dissection and really push us beyond our comfort zone. There was also a team from Eindhoven Medical Robotics who were demonstrating their seven-axis RoBoSculpt robot which utilised information from CT scans to carefully drill the temporal bone. This was a wonderful insight into one potential future aspect of otology.

A particularly memorable moment was the 36<sup>th</sup> Brinkman lecture given by Prof Erwin Offeciers from the European Institute for ORL-HNS, Wilrijk-Antwerp, Belgium. His talk on

“Evidence-Based Medicine or Experienced-Based Decision Making: a personal career perspective” was a wonderful opportunity to learn from the experiences and life stories of a true pioneer in European otology.

The course dinners were wonderful and allowed the delegates to develop connections with ENT surgeons from around Europe. I made many new friends and I look forward to seeing them again at international courses and conferences in the future.

## **Week 2 – Observership at the Radboud University Medical Centre**

The week-long observership at Radboud University Medical Centre that followed the course allowed me to really consolidate all that I learned from the previous week. Together with fellow senior ENT trainees Nish Mehta and Nina Mistry we spent time in theatre with Prof Mylanus, Dr Kunst and Dr Abma. During this week we saw many complex ENT cases including revision mastoid surgery for cholesteatoma, subtotal petrosectomy and superior semi-circular canal dehiscence plugging and resurfacing.

I particularly enjoyed learning about the use of intra-cochlear electrocochleography during cochlear implantation as a real-time objective continuous feedback tool for cochlear health and basilar membrane integrity. This is something that is about to be used in my hospital and I could learn about it from a centre with experience using it.

Being able to be in theatre and learn directly from the team was a great opportunity. The slight differences in peri-operative management were also useful to learn more about. We were always made to feel extremely welcome and the whole team were incredibly hospitable.

Overall, the whole experience was fantastic, and I would like to express my gratitude towards the whole team at Radboud University Medical Centre for their kindness and the opportunity to learn all that I did. I would also like to thank the TWJ Foundation for awarding me this prestigious Fellowship. I have already utilised a lot of these new techniques and ideas learned during my time in Nijmegen within my UK practice. I hope to further implement these to benefit my patients in future.



