

TWJ Clinical Fellowship in Otology/Neurotology Report

University Health Network, Toronto

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I am very grateful to the Trustees of the TWJ Foundation for the opportunity to travel to Toronto as the Otology and Neurotology Fellow at the University Hospital Network. Dr Rutka was an incredible mentor and a generous, welcoming host to my family and I during our time in Toronto.

My time in Toronto has provided me with not only a wide range of clinical and surgical skills but also a life-enriching experience I will never forget. In addition to time spent with Dr Rutka at Toronto General Hospital (TGH) I also worked under the supervision of Dr Pothier and Dr Halik. I would like to describe the highlights of the clinical, surgical, research and educational opportunities I was given as well as my experience of Toronto.

The majority of my time was spent with Dr Rutka at TGH. TGH is part of the University Health Network and is affiliated with the University of Toronto. One of the main highlights was the exposure to and the opportunity to take part in the weekly award-winning Hertz Multi-disciplinary Neurotology Clinic. Patients with complex clinical issues and chronic dizziness attend this clinic from all over Ontario. Having spent time in a dedicated unit with Dr Rutka and other members of the MDT (a neurologist, a vestibular psychiatrist, a vestibular physiotherapist, a dedicated research nurse, and the audiology team) I feel I have finally achieved a comprehensive and logical understanding of a wide range of vestibular pathology.

As well as complex medical neurotology, Dr Rutka also specialises in lateral skull base surgery, vestibular surgery and complex/revision mastoid surgery. Dr Rutka has exceptional surgical skills and is a gifted teacher. The amount of operating time with Dr Rutka is limited: however, he does have an interesting caseload providing excellent exposure to advanced otology. I also was given the opportunity to spend time with Dr Pothier at TGH. Dr Pothier's main areas of expertise are in medical neurotology and endoscopic ear surgery. His approach as an advocate of totally endoscopic ear surgery has been very insightful and something I hope to incorporate into my practice. I regularly travelled to a District General Hospital in Markham Stouffville to meet Dr Halik. Dr. Halik has a practice specialising in ossiculoplasty and stapes surgery and he performs over 250 stapedotomies per year. He is an excellent teacher and in particular he has taught me how to perform the reverse order stapedotomy. This is a new technique I had never seen but now plan to adopt into

my future practice. As part of my training I attended the Harvard Endoscopic Ear Surgery Course which enabled me to further advance my skills in endoscopic ear surgery. Overall my time in Toronto supplemented my registrar training with exposure to advanced otology, lateral skull base surgery and endoscopic ear surgery.

One of the other highlights of the fellowship is the amount of travel incorporated into the placement. On a monthly basis we travelled to Niagara. We also regularly travelled to Dryden and Sioux Lookout in Northern Ontario. These trips provided a great insight into the challenges of providing healthcare to a rural population over a vast area. Dr Rutka's academic programme also encompassed travel abroad: within a month of starting we travelled to Iran for the Asia Pacific Otology and Neurotology meeting. This was a fascinating first trip to an interesting country. We were given a warm welcome by the local ENT staff who couldn't have been more hospitable. The conference was excellent with a wide range of international guest speakers. I also had the opportunity to present the "Oxford Experience of Carina Middle Ear Implants". The travel continued throughout the fellowship and in November Dr Rutka very generously sent three fellows and myself to Thailand to attend an ear camp. Our team, which also included members of the ENT department from Bangkok, travelled to two remote areas called Ubonrachathani and Champasak in Laos. Over the course of two days we reviewed 734 people in an outpatient setting and performed 75 procedures, all under local anaesthetic. This was an amazing opportunity on so many levels: not only the surgical and clinical experience but also the people I met.

After completing 12 months with Dr Rutka I extended my time by a further three months working as a paediatric Fellow at The Hospital for Sick Children (also known as Sick Kids). This was a great opportunity to work in a tertiary paediatric centre with an excellent international reputation. During my time at Sick Kids I was able to work with Dr Blake Papsin and Dr Sharon Cushing on the cochlear implant programme and Dr Adrian James who has one of the world's largest paediatric endoscopic ear surgery practices. I was also able to improve my skills in the management of paediatric airway cases.

Overall this has been an excellent year which provided me with great training: I am very grateful and thank the TWJ Foundation for their support.