

# **TWJ Clinical Fellowship in Otology/Skull Base Surgery**

**University Hospital Network, Toronto**

**June to December 2014**

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I was very fortunate to be offered the very prestigious TWJ Fellowship in Otology and Skull Base Surgery at the University Hospital Network in Toronto for 6 months from June to December 2014.

Professor John Rutka under whose auspices the fellowship runs has mentored many trainees from the UK, and has been the driving force in making the University Hospital Network in Toronto a world-renowned centre for Otology and Neurotology.

The fellowship is based at Toronto General Hospital (TGH) and Toronto Western Hospital, both part of the University Hospital Network. TGH is a major teaching hospital proud of several firsts, such as the development and first clinical use of insulin in 1922, first clinical use of the anticoagulant heparin, the world's first single and double lung transplant and several other achievements. TGH also boasts one the world's best Advanced Hearing and Balance Centres in North America.

The comprehensiveness and flexibility of the fellowship was second to none, and I was given the opportunity to slant my fellowship towards lateral skull base surgery and also to work with Dr Pothier who does middle ear endoscopic surgery. The unit

receives complex referrals from all around Canada for dizzy patients and runs a weekly 'Hertz multidisciplinary dizzy clinic' which has won several awards. The multidisciplinary management of these clinics was an eye opener to me and changed my entire perception and understanding of managing dizzy patients. I spent a lot of my operating time learning and improving my skills in advanced middle ear and lateral skull base surgery.

I also attended outreach clinics and theatres at Niagara Falls, Sioux Lookout and Dryden and thoroughly enjoyed the experience and generous hospitality of Professor Rutka during these trips.

I was encouraged to attend international otology/skull base meetings, and attended the European Skull Base Society Meeting in Paris at the start of my fellowship and the Advanced Temporal Bone Dissection Course at the University of Toronto, courtesy of Professor Rutka. I also enjoyed the experience of being an examiner for the CEHPEA (Centre for the Evaluation of Health Professionals Educated Abroad) conducted by the Medical Council of Canada.

An experience I certainly will never forget is the 'Visiting Professor's wilderness camping trip' to Killarney national park for 3 days. Besides this I visited the well-known 'sights and sounds' of Toronto and many high-end restaurants for lunches and dinners all courtesy of Professor Rutka.

Research formed an important aspect of the fellowship, and the well-kept databases and presence of a research fellow made my life easy and resulted in 15 publications and multiple presentations in 6 months, something that has transformed my CV completely.

In striking contrast to the NHS I noticed the lack of managers and hospital bureaucracy. I thoroughly enjoyed my stay in Toronto and learned tremendously from the experience. I am thankful to the Trustees of the TWJ Foundation and Professor Rutka for funding my visit and making it such a memorable experience.

### **Logbook summary of Otology/Skull Base procedures:**

Translabyrinthine VS excision 6

Middle fossa VS approach 1

Three canal labyrinthectomy 4

CSF leak repair 2

VII nerve decompression 2

Parotidectomy and VII-XII anastomosis 2

Temporal bone resection 1

Mastoidectomy 12

Tympanoplasty 6

Stapedotomy 4

### **Publications & presentations generated during the Fellowship:**

1: Syed MI, Rutka JA, Sharma A, Cushing SL. The 'dizzy child': a 12-minute consultation. Clin Otolaryngol. 2014 Aug;39(4):228-34

2: Syed MI, Rutka J, Hendry J, Browning GG. Positive pressure therapy for Meniere's syndrome/ disease with a Meniett device: A systematic review of randomised controlled trials. Clin Otolaryngol. 2014 Oct 24. doi:10.1111/coa.12344

3: Ilan O, Syed MI, Weinreb I, Rutka JA. Inner ear damage following electric current and lightning injury: a literature review. Eur Arch Otorhinolaryngol. 2015 Jan 8

4: Syed MI, Rutka JA, Pothier DD. Application of phenol as topical anaesthesia using the Derlacki elevator for miringotomy. Clin Otolaryngol. 2015 Feb;40(1):69-70

5: Syed MI, Ilan O, Rutka JA. A simple technique for minor salivary gland and oral biopsy in the clinic: our experience. Clin Otolaryngol. (Accepted for publication)

6: Syed MI, Ilan O, Pothier DD, Leong AC, Rutka JA. Management of Meniere's syndrome or disease: has the quality of evidence changed over the past two decades Otol Neurotol (Accepted for publication)

7: Syed MI, Plodpai Y, Khoo SG, Rutka JA Primary epidermoid cysts of the mastoid: clinical and treatment implications Eur Arch Otorhinolaryngol (under review)

8: Syed MI, Nassar J, Pothier DD, Rutka JA The Behaviour of Residual Tumor after Incomplete Excision of Vestibular Schwannomas: Is it such a bad thing to leave some behind? Clin Otolaryngol (under review)

9: Syed MI, Ilan O, Nassar J, Rutka JA. Intratympanic therapy in Meniere's syndrome or disease: up to date evidence for clinical practise Clin Otolaryngol (under review)

10: Syed MI, Ilan O, Pothier DD, Rutka JA Olfactory and Cochleovestibular dysfunction after head injury in the workplace: an updated series Clin Otolaryngol (under review)

11: Syed MI, Ilan O, Nassar J, Rutka JA. The 'Toronto meatoplasty' revisited. Clin Otolaryngol (under review)

12: Syed MI, Ilan O, Pothier DD, Rutka JA. Contralateral hearing in vestibular schwannomas (In progress)

13: Nassar J, Syed MI, Rutka JA. A 27 year review of mastoid surgery in adults: outcomes, complications and lessons learnt (in progress)

14: Ilan O, Syed MI, Pothier DD, Rutka JA. Post traumatic cochleovestibular loss from assaults causing head injury in the workplace Clin Otolaryngol (under review)

15: Syed MI. Comment on: Controversies in the management of sudden sensorineural hearing loss (SSNHL): an evidence based review. Clin Otolaryngol (accepted for publication)

#### **Presentations:**

- *'Trends in the management of Meniere's disease or syndrome'* at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Otolaryngology and Rhinology Conference, Dubai April 2015 [as guest speaker]
- *'Surgical Management Of Spontaneous CSF Leaks Involving The Temporal Bone'* at the European Skull base Congress, Paris April 2014
- *'Positive pressure therapy for Meniere's syndrome/ disease with a Meniett device: A systematic review of randomised controlled trials'* at the Grand rounds Nov 2014, University of Toronto
- *'Intratympanic therapy in Meniere's syndrome or disease: up to date evidence for clinical practise'* at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Otolaryngology and Rhinology Conference, Dubai April 2015 [as guest speaker]
- *'Olfactory and Cochleovestibular dysfunction after head injury at the workplace'* Submitted to the CSOHNS meeting in Winnipeg, Canada June 2015

- *'Clinical evidence for a spectrum of injury in gentamicin induced vestibular loss'*  
Submitted to the CSOHNS meeting in Winnipeg, Canada June 2015
- *'Post traumatic cochleovestibular loss from assaults causing head injury in the workplace'* Submitted to the CSOHNS meeting in Winnipeg, Canada June 2015
- *'A 27 year review of mastoid surgery in adults: outcomes, complications and lessons learnt'* Submitted to the CSOHNS meeting in Winnipeg, Canada June 2015