

IOS – UK, INDO BRITISH TRAVELING FELLOWSHIP

Report by Ajay Puri

As a recipient of the IOS – UK, Indo British traveling fellowship I had the opportunity to spend 2 weeks in the UK visiting hospitals specializing in orthopaedic oncology and attending two conferences.

The first week was spent at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, Stanmore, London while the second was spent at the Royal Orthopaedic Hospital in Birmingham. Interspersed between these were 2 meetings over the weekends, the first the IOS UK annual conference at Llandudno in Wales and the second the British Orthopaedic Oncology Society meeting in Belfast.

The 3 IOS UK fellows (Deenudhayalan from Coimbatore, Manish Chaddha from Delhi and me) all converged on London on the 13th of June. Sunday the 14th was dedicated to sampling the sights, sounds and weather of London. Manish's suggestion that London seen at one glance from the "London eye" was readily agreed to by all in the morning. The afternoon was spent lazing at Hyde Park enjoying the English summer. In the evening we met up at Venu's residence for dinner for our first introduction to two of the masterminds (Venu and Anand Arya) behind the IOS UK endeavour. Due to my interest in tumors I was scheduled to spend the entire week at Stanmore while the others would be visiting various hospitals to encompass their myriad interests.

The fact that we were housed in central London meant that all of us traveled equally (at least an hour each) to our respective destinations. This ensured that our days began early and any lingering thoughts that this would be a relaxed and lazy visit were quickly dispelled. All of us usually got back in the late evening following which on 2 of the days we were hosted to an excellent dinner, one by Krishna from Queen's hospital and the other by Biomet (one of the fellowship sponsors). Krishna fed us a sumptuous Indian meal while giving us an opportunity to interact with his department colleagues and Biomet hosted us in a restaurant at Greenwich village preceded by an educational talk on bearing surfaces.

The units at Stanmore and Birmingham are two of the largest tumor referral units in Europe and have a vast experience in dealing with musculoskeletal oncology.

My time was gainfully spent at both units interacting with the various surgeons (Mr. Briggs, Mr. Pollock, Mr. Grimer, Mr. Tillman, Mr. Abudu and Mr. Jeys) in the service, attending surgeries and joining in the out patient clinics.

The weekly multidisciplinary tumor meetings were very informative and reinforced the advantages of having a centralised decision making entity where all information regarding the patient is available and is evaluated. The video conferencing from Stanmore with the medical oncology and radiotherapy service at the University Medical College in London during these MDT meetings via large screen monitors made the entire experience quite interesting.

The out patient clinics gave me an opportunity to see the long term survivors. Follow up results and issues pertaining to the reconstructions carried out 15 to 20 years earlier were a novelty.

I also visited the department of Biomechanical Engineering at Stanmore which houses Stanmore Implants who are the world leaders in customised CAD CAM implants and Mr. Paul Unwin was gracious enough to take me through a guided tour of the facilities. The time that goes into the planning and manufacture of each individual customised implant is quite mind boggling and discussing some cases with the designers allowed me to appreciate the deep understanding that these engineers have of medical anatomy with its resultant biomechanics and the tremendous effort that is involved in fabricating each of these individual pieces.



The IOS UK annual conference at Llandudno in Wales hosted by Amit Sinha was an opportunity to interact with Indian orthopaedic surgeons in the UK and their families. It was a mix of academics and fun with high quality papers and talks by luminaries like Joe Dias, Andrew Wallace and Peter Kay. The cable car ride to the Great Orme was a memorable experience (in spite of the weather ; the law of averages had to catch up with us some time having enjoyed glorious weather during our week in London and the subsequent week thereafter in Birmingham).

The presentations I made at both the academic meetings were well received. The British Orthopaedic Oncology Society meeting at Belfast was very enjoyable too being quite an informal affair where issues are debated in an invigorating environment in marked absence of the expected British formality and stiffness. The keynote address by Prof. Flannigan on the importance of having a tumor repository was very interesting.

The visit served as an excellent opportunity to continue and further enhance our interaction with the main sarcoma units in the UK and create an awareness of the progress of orthopaedic oncology in India over the last decade.