

Report by Jim Vellara, IOS UK Travelling Spinal Fellowship (Manchester & Oswestry) 2011

19 June

I landed at Manchester by noon. Mr. Verma had invited me for dinner at his home. It was a very pleasant evening. Mr. Verma showed me the imaging of cases planned for the week and some of their spinal deformity cases which were really impressive. Mr. Verma had planned out my week so well that I knew the entire weeks schedule on Sunday itself.

20 June

Mr. Verma picked me up from the hotel at 8.00 am and took me to Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. I was introduced to Mr. Dashti and Mr. Oxborrow who were Consultants in the Spine Unit at Royal Manchester Children's Hospital and Salford Royal. I joined Mr. Dashti in the OT for a case of Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis. Traction films under GA were obtained before surgery. Surgery was uneventful and the child had good correction of the Double curve. Mr. Verma picked me up by evening and took me to Salford Royal where I met up with Mr. Mohammed Said, the clinical director of Spine department.

21 June

I was picked up at the Hotel by Mr. Verma and dropped at Salford Royal Hospital. I met the HR staff of hospital and got their letter permitting me to be in the Hospital. At this point I should mention that even though it was done in less than 5 minutes, there was lot of effort put in by Mr. Verma which made it possible. He had sent me all the forms well in advance and had forwarded it to the HR making my work so easy. I spent the day in OT with Mr. Oxborrow. There were two cases. The first was a PLIF for an old case of discectomy L4/5 with features of instability and second one was a Micro discectomy

22 June

In the morning session, I attended the weekly case discussions of the spine department along with neuro radiologists. Many interesting cases were discussed. In the afternoon, I attended clinics with Mr. Verma.

23 June

In OT with Mr. Verma and Mr. Said. It was a case of adult deformity. 39 year old lady with a double curve. T2 to L5 fusion was performed with screws at almost all levels. The correction obtained was excellent.

24 June

I attended the clinics at the Royal Manchester children's hospital with Mr. Oxborrow and Mr. Dashti. The main points I found was that the surgeons spent a lot of time educating the patient and relatives about the surgical treatment. Patient's concerns were clarified in detail.

I departed from the hospital to Manchester Piccadilly station to catch my train to Birmingham. I reached there by evening and checked into the hotel. Mr. Amit Sinha was kind enough to arrange accommodation for me near the IOSUK conference venue. I met the fellows from other states and Dr. Raju Karuppal from Calicut who was the direct IOSUK fellow.

25 June

We had vehicle waiting for us to take us to the conference venue which was the National motor cycle museum. Mr K P Meda who was the organising secretary had arranged complementary registration for all the visiting fellows. The conference had a number of good free papers and 4 lectures. In the evening we had a lovely dinner and entertainment programme. It was good to get back to Indian food and familiar faces. Mr. Sinha and Mr. Venu Kavarthappu introduced us to many of the IOSUK members.

26 June

We checked out of the hotel and departed by car for a river cruise at Stratford upon Avon which was organised as part of the meeting. It was a beautiful summer day . We had the lunch in the boat and after a 2 hour cruise was back. We visited the Shakespeare's birth place too. After the visit I travelled with Mr. Amit Sinha to Oswestry by car. The route was scenic with beautiful English country side. Mr. Jai Trivedi took me around RJAH and was kind enough to arrange accommodation for me at the Doctor's residence. I accompanied Mr. Trivedi to a local Cricket match at Wrexham.

27 June

The Orthopaedic department starts work every day morning 8.30 at the Plaster room where over coffee there is a case discussion with the Registrar answering questions from the consultant who presents the case. After the teaching programme I joined Mr. Balain in the OT for two spine cases. First was a 2 level ACDF. Second one was lumbar spinal canal decompression where they used Spinous process osteotomy. This involves much less muscle dissection and it was something new I learnt.

28 June

I travelled to Alderhey's Hospital at Liverpool with Mr. Trivedi. We had a case of Duchene scoliosis. It was perfectly done. It did not bleed much even though we had anticipated more. Cell savers and MEP was used in the OT. After the case we drove back to Oswestry for rounds in the evening. I was taken out for a dinner with Mr. Jaffray , Mr. Balain, Mr. Trivedi at an Italian restaurant.

29 June

Travelled to Alderhey's for a full day clinic with Mr. Trivedi. It was a Pediatric clinic. I saw many deformities and had the opportunity to watch the steps in decision making. Especially important in cases like Neuromuscular Scoliosis in spina bifida which has relentless progression and child finding it difficult to sit. But surgery carries higher risk of infection too. It was interesting to note the way the consent is taken. It takes almost 45 minutes per patient to explain and take the informed consent

30 June

Morning case discussion about Cervical disc prolapse and also Brachial plexus injuries. After the discussion I had an opportunity to visit The Midland spinal injuries unit. I had an enlightening conversation with Prof. El Masry. I also joined the Grand rounds with Mr. Joy Mukherjee and Mr. Vinay Kumar. I was impressed by the excellent results they have with conservative treatment of injuries.

In the afternoon I joined with Mr. Jaffray and Mr. Trivedi for a L5/S1 ALIF. It was a case of Old failed Posterolateral fusion. The OT in charge was kind enough to explain to me the details of Cell savers .

1 July

After attending the consent clinic and morning rounds, Mr. Trivedi dropped me at the Gobowen station for me to catch a train to London. My entire stay in Oswestry was a pleasure because of the effort taken by Mr. Trivedi and I hope I will have an opportunity to visit their centre again.

It was an excellent 2 weeks I spent in UK- I learnt a lot and I made lot of friends. I have to highlight the effort taken by IOSUK especially Mr. Amit Sinha in organising this fellowship. I am thankful to him. Mr. Verma and Mr. Trivedi made sure that my visit was useful and they took a lot of pains in organising this. I was taken care of so well that I never had any hitches anywhere. I sincerely thank both of them for all the help.

Suggestions:

Ask the fellows what procedures they would like to observe and communicate to trainers so that they can arrange the cases accordingly

It will be good if IOSUK can partly support travelling Expense for fellows of state chapters as well

It will help if in campus accommodation is available for fellows. That will reduce the expense and also allow more time to be spent at the hospital.

**Dr Jim Vellara, Consultant Spine Unit,
Metropolitan Hospital, Trichur**