

Report from Educational Bursary recipient: Dr Piotr Czarnecki

This travelling fellowship was a result of an invitation of the ASSH to national societies, including the Polish Society for Surgery of the Hand, and with the financial support of IFSSH. I travelled to a number of hand surgery centers in the USA from September 16th to October 18th, 2013.

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, host – Kevin C. Chung, September 16th – 20th

That was my first stop on my USA Hand Surgery Tour. The visit was very well planned and I received a schedule for before arriving in Ann Arbor. I had the opportunity to observe Dr Chung in the OR, both performing reconstructive and microsurgery procedures such as free gracilis transfers and usual every day procedures. I attended clinics and could consult preoperative patients and evaluate great postoperative results. Dr Chung showed also his great scientific possibilities which are really impressive and are proof of evidence based medicine, his practice is truly influenced by results evaluation. I also met Drs Ochi and Kato from Japan and we were asked to present our experiences in the form of a mini hand symposium. The week was concluded by dinner together with Dr Chung and his fellows.



San Francisco, host – Edward Diao, September 23th – 27th

With Dr Diao I experienced the way that a private hand surgeon works by being his shadow for most activities during busy days. I joined him in clinics and the OR in a few different hospitals/units which was really valuable. It was extremely beneficial to discuss together some issues connected with CMC joint



arthritis including trapeziectomy with suspensionplasty in contrast to joint replacement. Dr Diao is also an expert in endoscopic carpal tunnel release which gave me different perspective on this issue. Sharing both his surgical and also clinical experience was really fruitful and supported the thought that choice of the treatment should not only be based on fancy techniques. I really appreciate the personal input of Dr Diao to my stay and the possibility to discuss many issues during the dinner at his home.

ASSH Annual Meeting, October 2nd – 5th

This kind of meeting is always a big event and I had my time full of sessions, courses and lectures. The scientific quality was exceptional and courses provided really recent information on many important issues such as nerve repair and congenital deformities.

Stanford University, Palo Alto, host - Amy Ladd, October 7th – 11th

Continuing my stay in California, I couldn't choose better. The team at Stanford is really a group of exceptional people, including James Chang, Jeffrey Yao and headed by charismatic Amy Ladd. I could observe each of them during top quality hand surgeries in a few facilities including Lucile Packard

Children Hospital, Stanford Medicine in Redwood City and the Robert A. Chase Hand & Upper Limb Center. I saw great presentations of wrist arthroscopy, CMC joint surgery, distal radius fractures and much more. The clinics I attended with Dr Ladd were a great opportunity to see her devotion to pediatric hands and share some of our experiences. Department meetings improved my theoretical knowledge. Dr Ladd was also very kind to invite my family for a dinner at her home which was a true American experience.



Hospital for Special Surgery, New York, host – Edward Athanasian, October 14th – 18th

My last stop was in New York with great opportunities to observe Dr Weiland, Dr Wolfe, Dr Lee and Dr Hotchkiss at work. The operating room time was used to a maximum and I switched from surgeon to surgeon. I observed and learned many techniques in CMC joint surgery. I also saw beautiful demonstration of elbow release and double nerve transfer for shoulder reanimation in upper plexus palsy. The clinics with Dr Weiland gave me the perspective of an extremely experienced hand surgeon, which is a big influence on everyone's practice. One of the biggest benefits was listening to Dr Athanasian discussing upper extremity tumors, as he is world-wide expert in this matter.



As well as observing operative techniques and various methods of treatment, this fellowship provided the opportunity to experience the US health system organization and medical education. These are important issues when discussing treatment options and results, and also showing possible ways of improvement of my own practice. The benefits are clinical and scientific, personal and systemic. These are not possible to experience in other way than travelling and visiting top world hand surgery centers.

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