

BAHT Report EuroHand 2008

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My Experience of Presenting at an International Conference

It seemed like a really good idea, when almost a year ahead of the Eurohand 2008 conference, I enthusiastically submitted my abstract for consideration. However, as the time came closer I began to feel a little apprehensive. Self-doubt and worries that I might 'muff it' gave me some disturbed nights sleep! But, for a number of years I had been aware of an interesting phenomenon – adhered flexor tendons in patients with conservatively managed finger fractures – and had been thinking through a method of treating this clinical problem whilst studying for an MSc in hand therapy at Derby University. Having hit on what I felt was a good solution I was keen to share my thoughts in the hope that other therapists would find it a useful treatment technique. However, I had not presented at an International conference before and I soon realised that this form of teaching would involve some adjustments to my presentation.

Firstly, I would need to ensure that I adhered to the strict timing allocation I had been allotted, which was only 7 minutes. Additionally, there was the need to ensure that I didn't try to cram too much information into my seven minute 'story'. This was going to be especially important at a European conference as most of the delegates would not have English as a first language. So, I set about cutting and editing and taking my presentation down to the bare bones, whilst leaving clear signposts as to where the 'story' was leading. I snipped and practiced until I was down to 6 minutes of jargon-free English. My objectives were to present a clear and concise case study of a patient and provide a treatment rationale for a clinical problem that would be of interest to hand therapists.

I was grateful to be 'on' first thing in the morning on the first day, so that I could relax and enjoy the rest of the conference. Timing of the presentations was achieved through the use of 'traffic lights', with all presenters starting on green and progressing through amber to red. Seeing the amber light illuminate produced a momentary check to my concentration, but thankfully I concluded my presentation just as the red light flickered on. Taking questions after a presentation is always a bit nerve wracking, but most therapists appreciate the effort and nerves that go into presenting and couch their queries sympathetically.

The feedback that I received from delegates at the conference indicated that I met my objectives, although speaking a little slower than I did would have been an improvement. I thoroughly enjoyed my experience of presenting at an international conference as it gave me the opportunity to meet and talk with other therapists who were interested in the field of fracture management. I would certainly do it again and would encourage others to consider sharing their clinical experiences, treatment ideas or research results with their colleagues.

Feedback from 14 participants

Presentation	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor
Style	14			
Content	12	2		
Speed	11	3		
Clarity	12	2		
Clinical Interest	12	2		
Additional comments	Very interesting subject – like to know more about it Clinical interest – High! Very valuable presentation Very interesting, enthusiastic personal performance Very interesting Easy to understand the language			