

EUROHAND 2008
FESSH X111TH CONGRESS
EFSHT 1XTH CONGRESS

JUNE 19TH TO 21ST, 2008 LAUSANNE

**MY EXPERIENCES IN PRESENTING AT AN
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

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Lausanne is a most beautiful place to hold a meeting with its gorgeous scenery of mountains and lakes and warm sunny weather. The Beaulieu Centre in Lausanne also provided an excellent venue with easy access, large comfortable lecture theatres and light and airy spaces. Swiss organisation, timing and hospitality was, as expected impeccable.

On the first day I was able to relax and enjoy the different FESHH and EFSHT sessions relevant to my practice or part of my CPD and learning needs.

It is always better to be able to present later in the meeting as the day before allows you to assess the likely audience, the level of questioning and the different nationalities represented.

Moving around the different rooms also makes you more at ease with your environment and therefore more relaxed when presenting.

It is advisable to be absolutely sure that you are happy with your presentation before traveling. In the weeks and days prior to the meeting every waking hour is spent perfecting all aspects from references to spelling and confidence in the knowledge of your subject is paramount in combating pre presentation nerves.

My remit was to host a focus session on "the evidence base for the rehabilitation of flexor tendon repairs in the hand". This involved talking for 90 minutes, which may sound a very daunting task as previously I had only ever given papers at conference lasting 10 minutes at most! This was not the case as I found that this subject is so vast and one that interests me greatly it was not hard to fill the time. Practice in presenting the material is also crucial to a smooth delivery and I have to thank my colleague Alison Roe who accompanied me and in Hand Therapy at Wythenshawe Hospital for their support, enthusiasm and comments!

As 90 minutes is rather a long time to maintain audience concentration I stopped at intervals to allow questions and was pleased that the audience were happy to interact. From the questioning both during and after the presentation it became clear that practice in the management of flexor tendon injuries in both the USA and other areas of Europe is different from our own experiences in the UK and thus the presentation gave food for thought for many of those present.

When one presents a topic in this way it is wonderful to know that it has been well received by the audience and their enthusiasm after the session was very encouraging. Many of them stayed behind and several requested to visit the unit in Manchester. It is at this point when discussions carry on beyond the time limit (into the coffee break) that you realise that your weeks of work and research into your subject have paid off and that your enthusiasm for your subject is infectious. I was pleased that I had taken copies of all the references used in the presentation as these were enthusiastically received by the audience.

Overall the feedback I received both immediately after the session and later in the day was extremely positive and I look

forward to visits from the Dutch and Swiss delegates who expressed an interest in coming to the UK.

There is a huge sense of relief when it is all over but fortunately as I had to present so early in the morning there was enough of the congress left for me to relax and enjoy the next session which was a successful collaboration between surgeons and therapists on the subject of the stiff joints.

The end of the conference was marked by the most wonderful lake trip in the evening to the casino in Montreux and dinner with old and new friends.

Presenting at conference especially at an international event may seem to be a rather frightening task but once experienced is quite addictive and hugely rewarding.

I would encourage those who are enthusiastic and knowledgeable on any particular aspect of Hand therapy to submit papers to these meetings and try the experience for themselves!

I would like to thank BAHT for the opportunity to attend this excellent congress.