

Bursary Report for the British Association of Hand Therapists

[Samantha Fenning]

[IFSHT/IFSHH/FESSH 2022 Special Bursary]

[6th-10th June 2022]

Introduction:

(100 words max; include details of who you are, why you applied for this bursary and your experience of the event)

I work as a band 7 Physiotherapist within Hands, Burns and Plastic surgery at the RVI in Newcastle. As part of my annual appraisal I identified the goals of reviewing and updating our finger flexor tendon treatment guidelines and the management of proximal phalanx fracture. I felt that the focus of the congress being on "Tendon Disorders of the Hand and Wrist" would have an impact on my current practice and day to day work and would assist me in achieving my goal. This alongside our surgeons attending conference would allow for joint service reviews.

Topic:

(500 words +/- 10%; this will be uploaded onto the BAHT website and may be included in an e-bulletin. The topic of this report will be agreed in negotiation with the Director of Bursaries. The report should not contain any comments that are potentially damaging or libellous.)

The congress was well organised with a thorough and comprehensive programme throughout the week. I can definitely say I was stimulated and inspired throughout the whole congress. Throughout the week I was able to attend a variety of lectures delivered by therapists and surgeons. I felt that the surgical sessions, although aimed at the surgeons helped me better understand the anatomy and biomechanics of certain disorders and allowed me to appreciate why we may choose to do certain therapy treatments with our patients post op. Whilst the therapy sessions gave me confidence in treatments I already deliver, but also challenged me on how these could be improved.

As a team we have been moving towards more conservative management of fractures, especially proximal phalanx fractures of the fingers, and the talk on fracture management further cemented this and gave me new splinting ideas to take back to the team. These talks gave me the confidence to further discuss and challenge the management of proximal phalanx fractures with our operating surgeons. I have also sent the details of the POINT trial to our research therapy lead with the hope that our centre can be included in this trial moving forwards.

On Wednesday I was able to attend the combined session on extensor tendons. We have recently been reviewing how we manage extensor tendon injuries and this session gave a fresh insight into low profile splinting and splinting to improve Boutonniere deformities. Together with another member of my team we have organised a teaching session for our team and a review session with our surgical team.

I was able to attend some of the brachial plexus/nerve injury/shoulder sessions with a surgeon from our service and we have now created a working group to review the service we deliver these patients and how we can improve timely referrals to therapy.

Unfortunately I was unable to attend the joint session on flexor tendon injuries of the hand due to attending the fracture management session. However, I plan to catch up on this session via the online platform post conference so as to not miss out on exciting content.

By meeting exhibitors from different companies across Europe I was able to identify new splinting products that help our Trust's green objectives and aims to be carbon neutral. I have forwarded these on to our green champion and I look forward to trialling the new materials.

Overall the conference was full of ideas to consider and/ or implement in my everyday practice. I feel I have taken away ideas about how to be more efficient and effective in my practice, more green in what we use and how we use it and I intend to make changes within my own practice to achieve better outcomes for my patients. I hope that our Trust will also join several research projects I heard about over the week. I am extremely grateful to BAHT for the bursary and the opportunity to attend my first international conference.

Word count: 496