

## **Bursary Report for the British Association of Hand Therapists**

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### **Introduction:**

I am a Hand Therapist working as part of a team in Northampton. Having had a long career break and returned to clinical practice 3 years ago, I am keen to ensure my knowledge and skills are up to date and evidence based where possible.

As the international congress was in London this year, this was a fantastic opportunity to attend without having to travel far.

I loved every minute of the 3 days that I was there, the presentations were excellent and the opportunity to meet Hand Therapists from elsewhere in the UK and around the world was invaluable.

### **Topic:**

The congress was a fantastic event which I feel privileged to have been able to attend.

Highlights include the combined surgeon and therapist talk on the management of extensor tendon injuries, to see in person many presenters who I have seen online and who have been leading the way forward in changing how these injuries can be managed was inspiring. As a direct result of that session we are updating our guidelines for the management of zone 3 extensor tendon injuries.

As our department is involved in the FIRST trial, it was helpful to attend the practical session that the trial team ran on the Tuesday afternoon. This is an exciting research project and it was a great opportunity to meet the team and have a go at inserting the temperature sensors into the splints.

The clinical reasoning workshop for the treatment of the stiff hand explored the various options to help manage patients presenting with significant

stiffness. Practically they demonstrated making a small MCPJ blocking CMMS cast to encourage IPJ active flexion and there was the opportunity to make a cast at the end of the session. This is a technique that I am keen to explore more and use clinically as appropriate.

Between sessions, it was great to be able to visit some of the stands in the exhibition area, I was able to watch splints being made from Orficast. I spent some time looking at the Gripable updates and discussing how this tool could be used within our department.

At the end of this week I am involved in a collaborative event for Hand Therapists in the Northamptonshire area and I am feeding back on these 3 topics from the congress:

- The results of the trial where patients who were awaiting surgery for carpal tunnel were randomised into 2 groups, a number of patients who were in the education, splinting and exercise group no longer required surgery. Not all patients presenting with CTS within our trust are offered Hand Therapy and setting up an education group where exercises can be taught and splint provided could help alleviate symptoms in a subgroup of these patients.

- A study carried out at Chelsea and Westminster looked into the environmental and economic impact of the use of thermoplastic splint, and they introduced a biodegradable alternative. It is all of our responsibility to do what we can to reduce the negative impact of plastic on our environment and I hope by opening up this discussion we can evaluate what we currently do and what changes we can start to make.

- In Oxford they have looked at the accuracy of joint range of motion measurements using goniometry when on a video call, they found the accuracy to be within 11.8 degrees when compared with standard face to face measurement, which is similar to the inter-rater reliability of face to face goniometry which is widely accepted clinically. They also discussed how to standardise positioning and maintaining therapist continuity would help maximise accuracy of measurements.

I am grateful to BAHT for the financial support which enabled me to attend this remarkable event.