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

**Karen Belward**

**BAHT Annual Conference, Birmingham**

**9th & 10th November 2018**

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| **Introduction:**  I am a Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist working in the hand therapy and upper limb field in an out-patient musculo-skeletal multi-disciplinary therapy department in a Major Trauma Centre in the South. My varied caseload involves acquired conditions, simple single digit trauma to major poly-trauma involving the upper limb.  I applied for the conference bursary to enable me to attend the conference to experience the education, the networking it brings and to receive my AHT award. Securing a bursary from BAHT is a personal achievement and I encourage everyone to apply for the various bursaries on offer. The event was well organised, very informative and in a fantastic venue. |
| **Topic: ‘What you have learned on the conference and how you will be able to put the information you have gained into practice’.**  For anyone who has never attended a BAHT conference I would strongly recommend you attending. Both days were an interesting mixture of free papers, symposia, poster presentations and workshops. Break time provided valuable opportunities for networking with known and new colleagues alike and for the sharing of information and ideas on clinical challenges. The selection of reps allowed me to explore new products, forging links for future reference. I plan to contact the Promedics team to arrange teaching sessions on Orficast and neoprene for newer members of my team. The BAHT table was a good addition, inviting delegates to provide feedback for BAHT and encouraging new members to join the BAHT committee. I had been interested in a committee role for some time; this gave me the impetus to express my interest. Since this time, I have been fortunate to join the education sub-committee. The role will not only be excellent for the profile of my trust but also for my continued personal and professional development.  Of particular interest and relevance to my current work was the symposia session on the Manchester short splint (MSS) by Alison Roe. My department are in the process of auditing our flexor tendon repairs against the BAHT standards. We are implementing the MSS for appropriate patients and plan to audit these once we have sufficient patient numbers. Talking through the regime and the rationale behind this was very helpful.  The presidential address by Mr Ian McNab was very insightful, highlighting the hand injury prevention drive from the BSSH and how they are using social media to promote this. I have encouraged my adult and paediatric hand colleagues to follow these initiatives for patients. My attention was also drawn to the Derby BSSH Hand Trauma symposium in January 2019, I plan to attend this. Partaking in a multi-disciplinary debate on shaping hand trauma care in the UK and contributing to hand injury prevention work will be a very fulfilling experience.  During Dr Fiona Sandford’s talk on her experience of Skype clinics in the innovation and changing practice symposium, it made me think of a possible solution to a recent clinical follow up problem. Since the conference I have had several communications with my trusts IT department on how I can have regular face-to-face communication with a complex surgical patient who lives on The Channel Islands who finds travelling to Southampton regularly not only expensive but physically demanding. We are exploring the use of innovation with this unique case using polycom to facilitate in the treatment sessions.  I found the workshops particularly interesting this year. Debbie Larson’s ‘anxiety and hand therapy’ session confirmed how important mental health well-being is for physical health improvements. Having a greater understanding of ‘ways’ to well-being will facilitate my patient care. The overseas workshop stimulated discussions on the challenges and rewards of hand therapy provision in developing countries; this rekindled a desire to take up this challenge at some point. To be able to share your skills and clinical time in such a setting would be unimaginable!  Thank you, BAHT, for the opportunity to attend the conference this year; it will be a memorable occasion as I also collected my AHT certificate and badge from Mr Ian McNab.  Word count: 537 |