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

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**Chinchalkar Hand Therapy Fellowship**

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| **Introduction:** (100 words max; include details of who you are, why you applied for this bursary and your experience of the event)I am a hand therapist with 7 years experience, having worked in the UK and Ireland. I applied for this bursary to help cover the expenses incurred to undertake the Chinchalkar Hand Therapy Fellowship programme. The four months I spent working and learning at the Hand and Upper Limb Centre in St Joseph’s has been an invaluable experience. My main motivation for applying to the Fellowship programme was to undergo a period of intense learning and mentoring to improve my knowledge and skills in hand therapy, therefore providing a better level of care to my future patients.  |
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| **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.)After 4 years working in the NHS I returned to my home country, Ireland. With positions far and few between I took up a temporary position in the west of Ireland before finding a permanent position in an acute fast paced hospital in Dublin. Although I had gained a number of years experience in hand therapy I felt I had lacked comprehensive and systematic mentoring due to staff under-resourcing. I decided to look into further education via the International Federation of Societies for Hand Therapy website and came across the Chinchalkar Hand Therapy Fellowship programme at St. Joseph’s Healthcare, London (Ont.). The fellowship programme had everything I was looking for: 4 months full time of hands on clinical experience with mentorship from two well accomplished hand therapists (Juliana Larocerie-Salgado & Joey Pipicelli), intensive education sessions on specific topics pertinent to my educational needs, engaging with multiple grand rounds on a weekly basis whereby the surgical teams discussed complex cases, surgical options and clinical reasoning for their chosen treatment plan.Specific objectives I set were: to become proficient at providing rehabilitation programmes and treatment for elbow injuries and improve my understanding and approach to treating peripheral nerve injuries. Having mentors whose specific interests in these areas (elbow - Joey, PNI - Juliana) meant that my goals aligned well with what the programme could offer. The programme encouraged me to take on complex cases and guide my patients through their rehabilitation, with the assistance of my mentors. Through this I gained hands-on experience in dynamic and static progressive splinting, and implementing new rehabilitation protocols and programmes. I had the wonderful opportunity to experience a number of cadaver dissection sessions facilitated by my mentor Juliana and one of the plastic surgical fellows Gabriel Beauchemin. During these sessions I observed the simulation of common presentations such as Boutonniere and swan neck deformities through imbalances of the extensor mechanism. I got to see how midcarpal instability comes about with injury to carpal ligaments, and also a sagittal band reconstruction using a slip of extensor digitorum communis. This experience provided me with a deeper insight into the surgical skills of my colleagues. I had numerous one on one education sessions with my mentors and on a number of occasions with the well renowned Shrikant Chinchalkar (CHT OT). I admire their enthusiasm and motivation to provide the best for their patients, their keen interest to share their knowledge with others and through undertaking research. I would encourage therapists with the desire to expand their knowledge and experience in hand therapy to apply to the programme. It has certainly been an exciting and extremely worthwhile undertaking. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at St. Joseph’s Hand Therapy Department for being warm and welcoming to their team, and to The British Association of Hand Therapists for their assistance in funding this fantastic opportunity.  |