

Bursary Report for the British Association of Hand Therapists

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2023 BAHT Conference

6-7 October 2023

Introduction:

Word count: 93

I'm a newly appointed clinical lecturer in hand therapy. I spend half of my week working clinically in a busy NHS hand therapy department and the other half leading hand therapy research projects and building research capacity. I was fortunate to have an abstract accepted for a free paper presentation at the 2023 BAHT conference and am grateful for the BAHT bursary of £125 to support my attendance. The conference was a great opportunity to network with other research-active hand therapists and to hear about the various projects taking place across the country.

Topic:

Word count: 468

The 2023 BAHT conference had an overall theme of sustainability, which included both the environmental aspects of our practice and workforce sustainability. There were inspirational talks from Prof Bev Harden, the Deputy Chief AHP Office for England, and Stuart Lane, Sustainability and Carbon Manager at University Hospitals Dorset. Bev highlighted how BAHT could strategically develop using the existing Accredited Hand Therapist qualification to map against the NHS England enhanced and advanced practice pathways. This is a personal area of interest for me (and other research-active hand therapists) as we explore how our clinical academic roles fit within the expansion of advanced practice and consultant hand therapy opportunities.

Stuart Lane spoke about his journey into NHS green leadership and the small steps we can all take locally to identify improvements in resource use. This included the ethics and sustainability of supply chains. I have written previously on this topic but found it challenging to make meaningful change within a large organisation due to restrictions on suppliers. Stuart's talk has reignited the fire.

The conference also included a summary of ongoing research trials. Over past 10-15 years there has been a growing body of UK-based hand therapy research, but most recently the OTTER and FIRST studies seem to have drawn the hand therapy community together in high-quality research projects. The outcomes of these studies will make a real difference to our patients. Hand therapists also had the opportunities to present smaller scale local projects. These were well designed and addressed important questions that had arisen from clinical practice and changing service needs.

Other highlights included presentations from Ass Prof Tom Quick and Hazel Brown on brachial plexus injuries and management, and Mr Carlos Heras-Palou's and Duncan Pearson's lectures and workshops on the ulnar wrist.

Brachial plexus trauma is not something that I see routinely in my clinic, but this was an engaging session and illustrated the improvements in outcome that can be achieved with focused MDT pathways. Plus, it's always useful to have a recap of the brachial plexus.

Similarly, the ulnar wrist sessions were entertaining and hands on. This is an area that I'm more familiar with in practice, but I always have more to learn and now have a list of things to look up to improve my clinical assessment and rehabilitation.

Attending the conference allowed me to present our collaborative qualitative project 'patient experiences of upper limb musculoskeletal disorders and work' and to launch our current hand therapy survey on the same topic. I look forward to working with colleagues in the hand therapy and wider communities as we explore work advice for our patients.

I am very grateful of the funding that I was awarded and encourage BAHT members to apply through the available bursary schemes to support all four pillars of their continued professional development.