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

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**BAHT Annual Conference 2024**

**4-5 October 2024**

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| **Introduction:**  I am a hand therapist from Romania and have been a BAHT member for 4 years, during which I’ve been working at the first hand surgery clinic in Romania. Being relatively new to this field, I was more than thrilled when I received the news that I had been awarded a bursary for the BAHT Annual Conference 2024 in Sheffield. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate and be alongside other hand therapists at such an event. It is always a pleasure to learn new things and meet fellow professionals. |
| **Topic:**  My experience at this year’s conference started with the Silver Splinting workshop organized by We Design. This workshop was incredibly beneficial for me as I treat patients daily with chronic and hypermobility hand deformities. I learned how to take proper measurements, and I plan to order this type of orthosis for my patients in the future.  The theme of 2024 BAHT Conference was “Celebrating 40 years of BAHT,” a testament to the organization's longstanding impact on the hand therapy community. Both days of the conference were engaging and packed with valuable information. One presentation that particularly caught my attention was delivered by Alex Lluch, titled “What is Carpal Instability? Diagnosis and Treatment Decision Process in Scapholunate Dysfunction.” His presentation helped me better understand concepts such as laxity, instability, and collapse - how to recognize them and the available surgical approaches. I also realized the pivotal role we, as therapists, play within the multidisciplinary team treating the patients. The connection between therapists and surgeons is crucial because understanding the surgical approach allows us to tailor the therapeutic program and understand the phases and processes the patient is going through.  It was also a pleasure to reconnect with Sarah Mee, and her presentation “Kinematics of the Wrist” offered a wealth of new therapeutic approaches. It complemented the information provided by the Spanish hand surgeon Alex Lluch perfectly.  The workshops were smaller and varied, ranging from “Wrist Instability” and “Practical Assessment of Entrapment Neuropathies” on the first day to “Scar Management” and “Therapy Management of Proximal Phalanx Fractures” on the second. In these workshops, we discussed specific cases and were able to share the approaches we would apply in such situations. For me, the most interesting workshop was “Therapy Management of Proximal Phalanx Fracture” because it reflected practical situations that I encounter with my patients daily.  During the symposium “Grafts, Flaps & Scars”, I learned about the latest approaches in post-operative scar management and the types of scars. The symposium “Hand Trauma” provided insightful discussions on treating transverse fractures of the proximal phalanx. The conclusion was that conservative treatment with orthosis and coaptation bandaging proved superior to surgical intervention in these cases.  I also enjoyed the informal discussions during the conference dinner and spending some wonderful hours at the restaurant. This allowed me to connect with other colleagues, exchange contacts and establish new friendships. It was also a pleasure to witness those therapists who have distinguished themselves in the field receive awards. I hope that one day, this level of recognition will also be achieved in the field of hand therapy in Romania.  Overall, it was a fantastic experience. Thank you, BAHT, for this opportunity and congratulations on a well-organized event. I am sure I will return next year. It was truly fascinating, especially as this was my second time attending the conference in person.  I am confident that I will implement everything I learned into my daily practice to ensure the best outcomes for my patients. I am already sharing my experience with other therapists in Romania through national congresses and working groups within the Romanian Society of Hand Surgery (RSSH). Although there is no official society for hand therapists in Romania yet, I encourage anyone, regardless of where they practice, to become a BAHT member to benefit from the valuable information provided by such a significant event. |