

Bursary Report for the British Association of Hand Therapists

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IFSHT/ IFSSH Tri-annual Congress – London, UK 6-10 June 2022]

Introduction:

I work as a Clinical Specialist ACP Hand Therapist in Manchester. I was invited to co-author a chapter on Extensor Tendon rehabilitation for the IFSSH / FESSH 2022 Congress Tendon Disorders book and subsequently to present on the same topic in the Extensor Tendon session alongside my co author, Nick Gape.

To attend and participate in such an incredible event, attended by over 3600 therapy and surgical delegates from all over the world and an additional 600 online, was a fantastic opportunity and to have financial assistance from BAHT towards my expenses was much appreciated.

(95 words)

Topic:

The organisation of this congress must have been a mammoth task and many congratulations to the committees responsible. London's ExCel centre provided an excellent backdrop to host a scientific programme with a vast array of lectures, free papers, debates and discussions, in addition to networking opportunities with fellow delegates and the chance to meet old friends. I have been lucky to attend two previous IFSHT/IFSSH Congresses many years ago and each has been unique but consistently excellent. I would urge BAHT members to seize any opportunity to attend.

As technology has moved on since my last attendance many of the presentations are now streamed and recorded so delegates can now benefit from being able to watch, for a limited time, sessions which you were unable to attend as they clashed with others (there were up to 10 rooms running concurrent sessions!). This allows you to watch and learn at your own pace, as well to consolidate knowledge gleaned from those you were able to attend but perhaps want to watch again. Very helpful when you reach brain saturation from all the new information...

Having the opportunity to write an IFSSH Congress book chapter and do a short presentation on a topic I am passionate about was daunting, but a definite career highlight. As a long advocate of Relative Motion, it was a privilege to finally meet Wyndell Merritt. There was some compelling video evidence from Professor Don Lalonde for the use of Relative Motion Flexion Splints for central slip injuries and repairs which has inspired some thought to consider this as a possible viable alternative to the long established SAM protocol.

Although I have presented several times such large audience was a little nerve wracking. I am in awe of speakers like Margareta Persson from Sweden who delivered such a natural, informative & inspiring presentation on managing Upper Limb Tendinopathies.

I attended many of the talks on fractures as I triage, assess and manage so much closed trauma. Interesting to hear differences in opinions of therapists and surgeons on how to best manage metacarpal and proximal phalanx fractures with both surgical and conservative management, the latter by means of different splinting ideas including fabricated neoprene soft splints and traction splinting. Inspired much debate and thought, there are after all 'many ways to crack a nut'!

The Trigger finger free paper session was useful to provide information on steroid injection therapy (eg How many injections? Is Lidocaine of any benefit? Which patient pre-op criteria will likely give a less good surgical outcome?), all relevant information for my practice.

Probably the most impactful talk came from a live virtual appearance of a lead Ukrainian hand surgeon who presented as part of the military Injuries session. The horror of such injuries and the perseverance and courage of the surgeons to 'learn fast' and skilfully treat their patients was emotional to watch. How gratifying to hear of the help being given by the IFSSH community via virtual teaching. The same as afoot for their hand therapists via IFSHT for anyone keen to be involved.

The next IFSHT meeting is in Washington, USA in 3 years time. If you get the chance to go, take it!

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