International Bone Research Association
Report on the Hand Surgery Fellowship
Program B: Clinical residential visit to a foreign host institution

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Dates: 20/1/2013-2/2/2013

Introduction

This was a two-week scholarship based around the practice of Dr Kebrle in the Czech republic who has a specialist interest in wrist surgery. The base for the scholarship is the Hand and Plastic Surgery Institute, Vysoke nad Jizerou. It is located in Liberec region of the Czech Republic, around 100 miles kilometers from Prague, the capital city. The town is a ski resort in the foot of the Giant Mountains.

The hospital is dedicated to hand surgery, and is the tertiary referral centre for both acute and chronic hand surgery problems for the whole nation.

During the week Dr Kebrle has three all-day surgery lists and one all-day clinic. There is also opportunity to assist in plastic surgery hand cases with the nine other consultants.

Aim

The aim of the scholarship was to gain experience in acute hand and wrist trauma, delayed trauma reconstruction, arthritis and wrist arthroscopy.

Experience gained
Surgical cases performed included:

Trauma – Phalanx fractures, Metacarpal fractures, distal radius fracture, arthroscopic-assisted percutaneous scaphoid fixation.

Trauma reconstruction – Distal radius mal-union, Scaphoid non-union, metacarpal non-union

Arthritis – DIPJ fusion, trapeziectomy, PIPJ replacement

Wrist arthroscopy – Diagnostic, Radial styloidectomy, SL ligament instability surgery

Soft tissue surgery – Carpal tunnel release, Digital nerve reconstruction, Trigger finger release, ECU stabilisation, mucous cyst excision, Dupytren's disease, DeQuervains tenosynovitis

Local anaesthetic blocks – Wrist block, plexus blocks, finger blocks

Clinical cases discussed in addition to above:

Trauma – Boxer's fracture, radial mal-union and treatment, comminuted phalangeal fracture and external fixation, UCL injury, PIPJ fractures, reverse Bennett's fracture, perilunate dislocation

Trauma reconstruction – DRUJ instability, forearm mal-union, SLAC / SNAC wrist

Arthritis – Radio-carpal fusion, wrist fusion, PIPJ arthroplasty, PRC

Wrist arthroscopy – SL ligament reconstruction, SL ligament instability

Soft-tissue – Dupytren's contracture, flexor tendon injury, CRPS, Managing soft-tissue injury, splinting, myalgia therapy

All these cases were discussed in great depth, which was inclusive of personal experience and in-depth knowledge of the medical literature. Dr Kerble has a vast experience in dealing with problems referred to him from throughout the Czech republic, has attended international meetings and is therefore well versed in techniques from other institutions. It has helped me in that Dr Kebrle is familiar with UK practice having completed his fellowship in Wrightington hospital.

The hand and plastic surgery institute is impressive purpose built facility. It is clean; it has ten consultants and 4 operating theatres, with clinic rooms, therapy room and radiography facility. The staff works together as a team. This was particularly impressive in the operating theatre, where Dr Kebrle has two experienced, dedicated nurses who are familiar with his techniques and equipment required. This and the use of local anaesthesia improves theatre efficiency, allowing time to review acute trauma patients presenting to the hospital during the lunch break. Dr Kerble is able to review post-operative patients the following day in a dressing room, plan their therapy, before they are discharged. The Wednesday clinics are very busy and in excess of 50 clinical cases are seen.

I am really grateful to Dr Kebrle for making my time in the Czech Republic of considerable value, as my aims and objectives were met. Due to nature of his tertiary referral practice, I believe it would be very difficult to see this number of cases in any other institution. He liaised with me in the weeks immediately after the scholarship was granted; in order arrange both clinic and theatre lists according to my aims and objective for the scholarship. He also went through his collection of teaching slides, videos and case series in order that I may learn from his overall results, and surgical tips / tricks. One concept I am particularly interested in exploring is the used of Dexamethasone in the management of soft-tissue pre-operatively.

Additionally, he has shown me great hospitality and invited me to his own home, as a guest for dinner and to meet his family. He arranged and encouraged me to take part in the local winter activities, including skiing, which I enjoyed despite being very inexperienced. As the hospital is in a remote part of the country, Dr

Kebrle also assisted me in the arrangement of transport and accommodation, which was difficult for me, being unable to speak Czech. Unfortunately this meant I was unable to talk to patients and staff, as I would have liked. This was the only slight negative aspect to report, and I would advise prospective scholars, to consider this in planning their visit.

Acknowledgement

I am much obliged to the IBRA and Dr Kebrle for this scholarship and opportunity to visit the training centre. Many thanks to the staff at the hospital, Dr Kebrle' family, medial representatives (for helping with my lost luggage) for their kindness, hospitality and helpfulness.

Dr Kebrle, myself and the theatre team

Dr Kebrle and myself performing wrist arthroscopy