IBRA Scholarship Report

Information about Scholar and Fellowship

Name of Scholar	Dana L Cruz, MD
Country of Citizenship	United States
Name and Country of Training Center	Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust London, United Kingdom
Name of Fellowship Director:	Mr Lorenzo Garagnani
Scholarship Type (Program B or C):	Program B Clinical residential visit to a foreign host institution
Scholarship date	April 1 – April 30, 2022

Professional and personal experience

Guy's & St Thomas Hospitals are centered in the heart of London with hand and wrist care shared between plastic and orthopaedic surgery trained consultants. The pathology encountered at these hospitals differed little from my own training center, spanning the diverse presentations of compressive neuropathy, tendinitis, arthritis, fibroproliferative disease, congenital hand differences and of course, fractures.

My personal expectations for the experience were mixed, given the widespread impact of the covid-19 pandemic and the public healthcare system of the United Kingdom. Fortunately, as elective surgeries were resumed, I was able to participate in the "new normal" of the NHS healthcare system, seeing patients in the office and in the operating theater. Although the operative experience differed little from my previous training, there were a number of implants I encountered which are not available in the US. Exposure to novel implants such as the modular thumb implants used in the basilar joint provided an entirely new perspective on my own approach to cmc arthritis – one approach does not fit all in this pathology.

What I found to be the most striking difference encountered between my own practice of hand surgery and that in the United Kingdom, had more to do with patients rather than the pathology or treatment itself. Patients encountered in the United Kingdom differed significantly from my own patients in that they often accepted their pathology as their misfortune – expecting to "carry on" with their lot. For that reason I believe, many more patients in the UK elect nonoperative treatment or long-term delay of surgical care. Whereas many of my own patients demand surgical treatment, many patients in London were horrified by the idea of surgery.

I would like to thank the International Bone Research Association for the opportunity to participate in this incredible exchange program. In addition to the coordination and funding provided by IBRA, I could not have had the phenomenal experience that I did without the guidance and support of Mr. Lorenzo Garagnani. Mr. Garagnani was an incredibly thoughtful and generous host – I look forward to our continued cross-cultural exchange and hope that I may one day extend the same opportunity to others.