

“It was an experience of a life time!” No other words to describe the six-day stay in The UK, attending the ASGBI Surgical Conference 2019 and the two-day hospital visit. This opportunity was provided by the ASGBI’s bursary for the surgical trainees in the developing countries.

I arrived in Telford city on the 6th of May evening. After a warm welcome and a good night rest, we attended the three-day surgical conference, which was held in the International Centre in Telford. I had the opportunity to listen to some amazing lectures and discussions on surgical complications during the conference. The best discussion was on surgeon’s psychology when he/she faces with a complication and making use of a support system to help him/her cope with it. So many important topics were discussed and new evidence were presented on various fields including surgical emergencies in pregnancy, enterocutaneous fistulae, splenectomy in trauma...etc…. When I posted the new concepts and evidence I learnt during the conference on the social media groups among the trainees in my country, it generated a very stimulating discussion.

During the conference, I met a number of surgical trainees from UK and we had some thought provoking discussions, which made me start a new research project after returning to Sri Lanka. One of the best experiences was to try the Da Vinci robotic simulator at the conference.
There are not many females in the surgical field in Sri Lanka. The number has been increasing since recent years and most of us are in the early stages of the training. I could meet some of the leading female surgeons from The UK and The USA. Listening to their stories and how they overcame the hardships was very inspiring and encouraging.

I had the opportunity to share clinical experiences from my country and listen to similar, as well as totally different clinical scenarios, with respect to types of diseases, the stage of presentation and management from the developed part of the world. Even though all three of the bursary winners were from developing countries, when we discussed how we manage different clinical conditions in our settings, we realized that there was so much to learn from each other. It

stimulated me to think of various ways of managing the same clinical problem in different settings.

Visit to the Shrewsbury hospital was a new experience where we could join the surgical ward rounds with Dr Adam Farquharson and Dr Mark Cheetam who were very welcoming and helpful. We observed a laparoscopic anterior resection and some endoscopies been done. There were new practices, which I have observed and am planning to incorporate to the practice in Sri Lanka. I really appreciate the time and effort spend by the consultants to communicate the management plan with the patients.

The Gala dinner was one of the most memorable experiences in my life. I felt privileged to be there. We spent a wonderful evening with some of the well-known, leading figures in surgery and enjoyed a lovely dinner in the air force museum in Telford, which was a spectacular location. I am extremely grateful to the ASGBI and the Surgical Foundation for giving me the opportunity for an experience of a lifetime. Special thanks to Ms Bhavnita Patel and the team who arranged a very comfortable stay for all of us and made us feel special throughout the stay.

Ms Tharanga Gamage

Sri Lanka



