

FELLOWSHIP OXFORD



Fellowship Traumatology, John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, United Kingdom – Laurens van der Plaats

2012 – 2013

Oxford is surprisingly little city, seeing its enormous scientific history and importance. I've done a 6-month fellowship in the John Radcliffe Hospital, located on Headington Hill, approximately 5km from Oxford city centre. Because the JR is situated on top of the hill it provides beautiful sights of the countryside during sunrise & sunset. It is a huge academic centre, covering about 66 acres. The Orthopedic department only deals with trauma. All elective surgery is done in the nearby Nuffield Orthopedic Centre; a purely Orthopedic hospital.

The JR has 2 theatre lists running 5 days a week (till 18.30 hours) and 1 list during the weekends (till 21.00 hours). Outpatient clinic runs 7 days a week, including every Sunday, Christmas etc. Outpatient afternoon clinics of more than 100 patients are no exception. A.k.a. it's a very busy department.

The 8 consultants have invaluable experience and are very motivated to provide a learning environment, with teaching sessions on Wednesday and Friday morning. The consultant on call stays in hospital over night. For the fellows (one from Singapore, one from Greece and me) it was hard work (two 60-70 hour weeks, followed by a week without fixed activities), with a lot of on calls during the week and weekends, but no ward work. Thus mainly clinic work and theatre time; I've been involved in ± 180 surgeries during my stay.

In essence treatment is no different than in the Netherlands although they are slightly more aggressive in bringing patients to theatre. Regularly patients are brought to theatre to have an examination or manipulation under anaesthesia done. Kid's fractures are not manipulated in A&E, but brought to theatre. Of course the majority of work is "basic trauma" (hip, ankle and wrist fractures), but the number of high energy trauma's is certainly higher in the UK. These are mainly (alcohol-related) traffic accidents.

This fellowship has allowed me to greatly expand my experience with basic and advanced trauma care. Examples of skills I have gained: reduction techniques,

Kapandji K-wiring of distal radius fractures, reduction & wiring of supracondylar pediatric elbow fractures, MIPO techniques, evaluation of pelvic fractures, SI-screw placement, placement of external fixators, technique of proper debridement of open fractures etc. Some of the more “exotic” cases I’ve been involved in: ORIF of Monteggia type fracture with plastic deformation, MIPO of triplane fracture, mangled extremity care (primary below knee amputation) and circular frame applications.

Living abroad for a couple of months is great; no weekends full of “obligatory” appointments; pure quality time with the family, as one of my colleagues said: “it’s like being on vacation every day, even though it’s hard work.” We made a lot of trips to Stonehenge, London, Windsor castle, the Jurassic coast and the Lake District for example.

In summary, this fellowship has allowed me enough experience and confidence to, independently, perform most trauma care. I can definitely recommend all residents to do a fellowship and I want to thank the NVOT and Anna Fonds for their financial support.