

Travel Fellowship Report 2018

International training in peripheral endovascular intervention

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank the British Society of Endovascular Therapy (BSET) for awarding me their Travel Fellowship in 2018. Additionally, I extend my gratitude to all of my trainers in the West Midlands Deanery, particularly those at University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust (Heartlands Hospital) for their invaluable continued advice and support and mentorship. I also thank A/Prof Jim Iliopoulos, Dr Eric Farmer, Dr John Crozier, Dr Greg Leslie and all of the staff at South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) [Liverpool Hospital] for welcoming me into their vascular department in Liverpool, NSW, Australia.

Liverpool Hospital is one of the biggest tertiary referral hospitals in the state of NSW, located in the South Western Sydney Local Health District which is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. It is one of the leading trauma centres for Australia with a bed capacity of 960, 23 operating rooms, 2 new 24/7 vascular hybrid suites with dedicated radiographers, 60 critical care beds and is the vascular centre for six public hospitals. It is a principal teaching hospital of the University of New South Wales and Western Sydney University.

I applied for a Clinical Superintendent position at Liverpool Hospital in September 2018 and travelled to Sydney for a year's work in January 2019. The medical administration department at the hospital were fantastic in getting all of my paperwork for appointment and travel through in time and the whole process was reasonably stress-free. The vascular department was beyond welcoming and went out of their way to help me transition to life in Oz. My AHPRA registration was the only outstanding application that hadn't been processed by the time of my arrival, but a few phone calls from the department consultants meant the matter was sorted in a matter of hours. On my first day, coinciding with the start of the new academic year, the Surgical Services Manager personally met me and gave me a tour of the hospital, ensuring that I had access and passwords set up for every facet of the hospital I needed and introduced me to the consultants and team.

Their first priority was to make sure I felt welcomed and settled and gave me time and help in sorting out all of the life admin needed (car/mobile/apartment) when moving to a different continent for any prolonged period of time. The entire experience of transitioning could not have been made easier or more pleasant. Everyone was tremendously helpful and kind and I was encouraged to spend as much time as I could exploring the country in recognition that a healthy work-life balance is crucial to job satisfaction.

The sheer volume of vascular work at the hospital meant that within a few months, I was independent in:

- Percutaneous US-guided vessel puncture and deployment of a variety of vascular closure devices (StarClose/Perclose Proglide/Angio-Seal)
- Antegrade, retrograde and direct vessel puncture
- Sheath, wire, support catheter, balloon (POBA/DCB) and stent (including Supera/VBX and DES [Zilver PTX, Xience]) selection for treatment of the full gamut of peripheral arterial disease
- Fistuloplasty and AVF stenting including central venous stenosis

- Intraluminal and sub-intimal angioplasty techniques including use of the OUTBACK re-entry catheter
- Iliac interventions, including kissing stents for both stenotic and occlusive disease
- SFA angioplasty and selective stenting for both stenotic and occlusive disease
- Tibial angioplasty for both stenotic and occlusive disease including selective tibial stenting
- I gained further exposure to carotid artery stenting, the CROSSER-CTO recanalization catheter and use of the SAFARI technique for distal work whilst maintaining my skills in open vascular surgery and acquiring new skills in trauma surgery

At the end of my first year, my full-intention was to return to the UK however the experience of a life, and prospect of a career, in Australia was too good to give up and so with a heavy heart (and it was by no means an easy decision) I resigned my consultancy at UHB NHS Trust back in the UK and stayed on. I have now been here for 3 years and counting, am employed as a consultant at Liverpool and intend to stay. In my second year, I turned my attention to aortic disease and have rapidly gained independence in standard infra-renal, fenestrated and thoracic EVAR. I am the vascular lead in the hub-and-spoke site High Risk Foot Clinics and actively involved with the Ingham Institute of Applied Medical Research through the South West Sydney Limb Preservation and Wound Research Unit. The whole experience has been quite honestly life-changing and I am delighted it was a choice I made.



Myself, Dr Greg Leslie, A/Prof Jim Iliopoulos and Dr Eric Farmer



With our nursing staff in one of the new vascular hybrid suites



Our outstanding vascular hybrid theatre nursing, anaesthetic support and radiography team