

Doctors in Training Grant

PRELIMINARY REPORT



1. Rugby World Cup Final at Old Trafford

Dr Colby Hart
Ophthalmology
Subspecialty
Fellowship (Cornea
Fellow)

London University
Hospitals NHS Foundation
Trust



I feel incredibly fortunate to have received the Doctors in Training Grant from MIGA which has afforded me the opportunity to travel to Liverpool to advance my career as a cornea specialist in ophthalmology. I have now completed 5 months of my cornea fellowship at Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, and I am thrilled to reflect on my experience so far.

During this period, I have gained a wealth of knowledge and experience in the field of corneal transplantation, including performing complex corneal transplant surgeries and managing anterior segment disease. I have had the privilege of collaborating and working alongside some of the world's leading anterior segment clinicians, including Professor Stephen Kaye, and engaging in cutting-edge research in ophthalmology.

Over the last 5 months, I have gained invaluable clinical experience in the field of corneal transplantation. I have honed my surgical skills in performing complex corneal transplant through this high-volume surgical fellowship. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside a fantastic group of cornea specialists who have trained in many different parts of the world. This one-on-one supervision in corneal transplant surgery has allowed me to appreciate the different techniques employed by specialists who have trained in different regions. In addition, I have learned how to manage patients with advanced anterior segment pathology. Liverpool is a tertiary referral centre for complex anterior segment disease, which allows me to see interesting cases from a wide catchment area. Additionally, I have managed patients with Boston keratoprosthesis, a highly specialised procedure that offers a surgical option for patients with severe corneal disease who would otherwise have limited options. This was one of the main attractions of this fellowship for me, as Boston keratoprosthesis is not currently offered by any specialists in Melbourne.

The clinical experience that I have gained during my fellowship has been instrumental in my development as a cornea specialist, and has prepared me to provide high-quality care to my patients on my return to Melbourne at the end of the year.

In addition to the clinical experience gained during my cornea fellowship, I have also been fortunate to be involved in cutting-edge research in the field of ophthalmology. One of the projects that I have been involved in is investigating the ability of artificial intelligence to diagnose and monitor anterior segment pathology. This research has the potential to change the way simple conditions are monitored and diagnosed in the future. Moreover, I have had the opportunity to work with world-renowned clinician and researcher Professor Stephen Kaye, who has published over 300 peer reviewed articles. Working alongside Professor Kaye has provided me with invaluable skills in developing and executing research projects that lead to publication. I have also learnt a lot about grant writing to assist hospitals access specialised surgical interventions, such as the Boston keratoprosthesis. This experience has been an exceptional opportunity to expand my knowledge and experience in the field of ophthalmology research, and I look forward to continuing to contribute to the advancement of the field in Melbourne upon my return after my fellowship.

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- 2. NHS Games - Third Place
- 3. Stadium Tour - Liverpool

Another major personal benefit from completing the fellowship is that I have been able to collaborate with leading anterior segment specialists from across the United Kingdom. This collaboration has provided me with unique insights and expertise that have enhanced my knowledge and skills as a cornea specialist. Through these connections, I have been able to develop meaningful professional relationships that will continue to benefit me in the future. I am particularly excited to have been selected as a finalist in the Bowman Club Fellowship Prize, a prestigious cornea meeting in the UK. This recognition is a testament to the quality of the training that I have received during my fellowship and underscores the potential for my continued growth and contributions to the field of ophthalmology. The connections and relationships that I have developed through my fellowship have been instrumental in my development as a cornea specialist and will continue to benefit me in my future endeavors.

One of the additional benefits of my cornea fellowship is the opportunity to travel throughout Europe. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, I was able to attend the ESCRS meeting in Milan, which enabled me to network with European cornea specialists and gain insights into the latest developments and techniques in the field. It was interesting to compare and contrast the ways in which anterior segment disease is managed in different parts of the world, and engage in discussion about complex cases with specialists working in Europe. This experience has broadened my perspective and provided me with a deeper understanding of the field of ophthalmology at a global level. Additionally, I have found personal enjoyment in traveling with my wife and exploring new countries. This opportunity to explore new places and cultures has been an enriching experience which I am grateful to have had the opportunity to do.

I have also had the opportunity to attend a number of sporting events while living in Liverpool. We saw the Australian Rugby League team win the grand final of the Rugby World Cup at Old Trafford. I have also watched Manchester United and Liverpool play in the English Premier League. I competed in the NHS Games football competition with some of my colleagues and we came third place overall which was a great result! It has been a real pleasure living in a city which has such a sporting focus. The locals live and breathe football!

I believe that completing this cornea fellowship will have a significant benefit to my local community in Melbourne. Through my training, I have gained the ability to perform and manage patients with Boston keratoprosthesis, which is not currently offered in Melbourne. This will provide a critical surgical option for patients with severe corneal disease who would otherwise have limited options. I will also strive to provide training to other cornea specialists in Melbourne on this surgical technique and manage patients who have had this procedure. Additionally, the development of my research and grant writing skills will enable me to contribute to the advancement of the field and bring new insights and treatments to the community. I also believe that the ability to offer corneal transplant surgery to the community will provide improved access to this critical service and enhance the overall quality of care for patients with corneal disease. I hope to implement similar disease screening and surveillance programs for conditions such as keratoconus, which exists here in the UK but are not readily setup in Melbourne.

Looking forward to the remaining 7 months of my cornea fellowship, I am excited to continue my development as a cornea specialist. One of my primary goals for the remainder of my fellowship is to become more independent with surgical operating, building on the complex corneal transplant surgeries that I have learned thus far. Additionally, I will continue to work on the research projects that I have been involved in during my fellowship, with the aim of completing publication in the coming months. Finally, I look forward to collaborating with specialists from other regions of the UK, building on the connections and relationships that I have developed during my time here. These collaborations will provide me with important insights and expertise that will further enhance my knowledge and skills as a cornea specialist, and enable me to better serve my community in Melbourne in the future.

Once again, I am very appreciative of the MIGA doctors in training grant in supporting me through this truly valuable experience.

Each year MIGA's Doctors in Training Grants Program offers six grants of \$10,000 to assist Doctors in Training whilst pursuing advanced training opportunities. Many different training types are eligible - visit our website to find out more and to apply.

If you're interested in applying for our DIT Grants Program, you must have medical indemnity insurance with MIGA. Thankfully, obtaining cover with MIGA is quick and easy using our Online Application Form.

We recognise that your insurance needs change throughout your career, and offer different levels of policy cover for each career stage.

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