

Doctors in Training Grant

FINAL REPORT



A great day with the faculty team at the One Brain Simulation Study Day

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In January 2018 I concluded a 12 month Neuroanaesthesia and Neurocritical Care Fellowship at the National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery (NHNN), Queen Square, in London. This hospital is part of the University College London Hospitals National Health Service Trust and is both the United Kingdom's largest dedicated neurological and neurosurgical hospital and a major international centre for research and training. At present, I am back in Australia working as a Staff Specialist within the Department of Anaesthesia and Perioperative Medicine at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, where my strong interest in neuroanaesthesia and perioperative medicine persists.

Throughout my time at Queen Square I was exposed to a significant and varied case-mix in neuroanaesthesia and both medical and surgical neurocritical care. Attaining this level of exposure allowed me to develop on the specific knowledge and skills needed to practice neuroanaesthesia as an independent specialist anaesthetist. With the supervision and guidance of the Fellowship Programme Director, Dr Sally Wilson, and my Educational Supervisor, Dr Yogi Amin, I was also able to develop further skills in perioperative medicine, medical education, quality improvement and management, research and leadership.

Given that the Neurosurgery Department at Queen Square provides a comprehensive national and international neurosurgical service, I had the opportunity to be involved in the perioperative management of patients presenting with a full range of neurosurgical pathologies for a wide range of neurosurgical procedures. Such procedures included epilepsy surgery, surgery for Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders, neuro-oncology, transphenoidal surgery for hormonally active pituitary tumours, transoral and skull base surgery, vascular neurosurgery, complex spine surgery, and procedures performed in conjunction with ear nose and throat, maxillo-facial and plastic surgery teams. Patients presenting at Queen Square for such procedures were often medically complex and presented a challenge to anaesthetic management. Participation in the perioperative management of patients for awake craniotomy procedures was a highlight of my time at Queen Square and I am grateful for the opportunity to have expanded on my volume of practice in this area. Overall, it was an enjoyable and educational experience to work collaboratively with the neurosurgeons at Queen Square. Specific neurosurgeons that I recall working with and learning from include Mr Neil Kitchen, who is the lead neurosurgeon for neuro-oncology, as well as the recent President Elect for The Society of British Neurological Surgeons, Mr Ahmed Toma, who subspecialises in hydrocephalus and neurovascular surgery, and Mr Andrew McEvoy, who has the largest adult epilepsy surgical practice in the United Kingdom.

Throughout the year I maintained involvement in data collection and analysis on a joint project with the Neurosurgery Department that is investigating the perioperative morbidity and mortality in normal pressure hydrocephalus patients admitted to Queen Square.

Providing elective and emergency anaesthesia care for patients in the Neuroradiology Department was another highlight of my time at Queen Square. Multiple diagnostic and interventional procedures were carried out in this department on a daily basis, providing the opportunity for me to be involved in the perioperative care of patients needing treatment of cerebral aneurysms, cerebral vasospasm, cerebral or spinal arteriovenous malformations and dural arteriovenous fistulae, vascular malformations of the head and neck, and ischaemic stroke. Dr Mary Newton is a senior neuroanaesthetist at Queen Square from whom I learnt new and refined ways of delivering anaesthetic care for interventional neuroradiology procedures. This is an interest area of mine and such procedures are also regularly performed at the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital. While at Queen Square I was also involved in discussions with senior clinicians about the expansion of the existing mechanical thrombectomy service and formalisation of an after-hours referral pathway for patients with ischaemic stroke and subarachnoid haemorrhage. With regard to medical education, I presented to the Neuroanaesthesia Department on the latest evidence and updates for anaesthesia in endovascular stroke therapy during a dedicated teaching session.

Another professional benefit of undertaking advanced neuroanaesthesia training at Queen Square was the opportunity to be involved in the One Brain Simulation Study Day as faculty. This is a lecture and simulation based course, originally developed in Bristol, that aims to reinforce the knowledge, skills and attitudes, including human factors, required for safe practice in the management of neurosurgical patients.

As part of this Fellowship Programme I spent 3 months working in the Surgical Neurocritical Care Unit, which is a 15 bed facility that manages more than 1,100 patients per year and serves the North London hyperacute stroke network. While in this unit I was fortunate to meet and work with Dr Martin Smith, who is the Past President of the Neuroanaesthesia and Critical Care Society of Great Britain and Ireland and current Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Neurosurgical Anesthesiology. His strong research interest and knowledge base of neurocritical care patients meant that his ward rounds were informative, practical and often entertaining. As a Senior Clinical Fellow I was involved in formal airway teaching for junior trainees when working in neurocritical care. Furthermore, when rostered to on-call duties, I was able to work with the multidisciplinary Neurocritical Care Outreach Service which enhanced my understanding of patient aftercare in postoperative neurosurgical patients.

As an extension to my Masters in Perioperative Medicine I successfully completed the Quality Service Improvement Redesign course and was able to work in the area of perioperative Patient Blood Management. The Quality Service Improvement Redesign course is a National Health Trust Improving Quality program that runs over 6 months and allows participants to work on a service change project. Completion of this programme has increased my knowledge in the areas of project management, leading improvement, measurement for improvement, demand and capacity, process mapping, creativity in improvement, engaging and understanding others, and sustainability of improvement. This professional development opportunity will allow me to introduce novel ideas for improving anaesthesia practice and changing the way that Anaesthetic and Perioperative Services work within Queensland Health, particularly in the area of Patient Blood Management.

Throughout the year, I conducted a literature review and wrote the Patient Blood Management Guidelines for Queen Square, a document that the Queen Square Clinical Guidelines Committee has formally approved.

On a personal level, undertaking an overseas fellowship was a life changing experience and I would highly recommend it to other doctors in training. It gave me the opportunity to live in central London, easily travel within Europe, establish solid friendships with international colleagues, and form some unforgettable memories. In addition to the experiences mentioned in my Preliminary Report, some further highlights include seeing the Northern Lights in Iceland, visiting the Christmas Markets in Austria, hiking the Caminito del Rey in Spain, and island hopping and waterfall chasing in Croatia.

I would like to thank MIGA for providing me with a Doctors in Training Grant to assist with the funding of my advanced neuroanaesthesia and neurocritical care training in London. MIGA provides a fantastic program that assists trainee doctors to pursue further education opportunities within Australia and around the world. I look forward to reading about the experiences of other MIGA Grant recipients.



1. Christmas Markets in Vienna
2. Farewell drinks at a local London pub with Queen Square colleagues
3. Exploring the Caminito del Rey in Spain
4. Travelling to Iceland was a major highlight of my time abroad. One of my top experiences was walking by glaciers at Jökulsárlón.

Each year MIGA's Doctors in Training Grants Program offers four Grants of \$5,000 to assist doctors in training whilst pursuing advanced training opportunities in Australia and abroad. Many different training types are eligible - visit our website to find out more and to apply.

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