

## **The Davies Foundation Travelling Fellowship Report**

**Dr A Karthikeyan**

My heart felt thanks to Davies Foundation and Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow for having given me the wonderful opportunity to get Training in Pediatric Ocular Oncology at Birmingham Children's Hospital, Birmingham.

### **Birmingham Children's Hospital**

The Pediatric ophthalmology department was wonderful and 3 days were dedicated for Retinoblastoma management.

The unit was patient friendly and the hospitality was wonderful. It is an Eye unit attached to a Children's hospital and hence a wonderful place to learn and manage with other multidisciplinary teams. The entire team was dedicated and was very supportive for patient care and also for training residents and fellows.

### **Training at Birmingham**

When I first applied, I was very anxious as I had applied just one date before the last date for the application. I was thrilled and excited when I got the award letter.

The training program was very good and had good exposure to significant number of Retinoblastoma patients. I was able to examine them and also use equipments involved in examination. As part of the training, I also attended the Multidisciplinary team meetings involved in the management of Retinoblastoma Patients.

The consultant Dr. Manoj Parulekar also helped me attend the RB unit at Barts and the London, the other center for RB care in U.K

He was also very supportive in getting me access to International journals.

I learnt all aspects of Retinoblastoma care which involves Clinical evaluation, taking photographs with Ret cam, Examining Histopathology slides, Enucleation, Orbital implants and Dermis fat grafts, RB genetics. However due to observer ship nature of the fellowship, I did not treat patients. I was also involved in Oncology and Genetic sessions with parents.

I was involved in all activities not only concerned with RB are but also with other Pediatric eye disorders.

I learnt finer techniques in congenital glaucoma surgery, Artisan lens implantation, Orbital implants, Dermis fat graft, and Ptosis surgery.

I also was provided with an opportunity to discuss with various multidisciplinary teams in Pediatric Neuro-Ophthalmology and Neuro-metabolic disorders.

It was an interesting experience to observe in an Eye unit attached to a children's hospital as it gave me the chance to observe some of the rare and challenging ward referrals and helped me in formulating decisions for my future career.

I was also able to attend the International conference in Ocular Oncology at Cambridge in September. It was very useful and was able to meet many stalwarts of the Specialty and get to know the most recent trends in Retinoblastoma management.

I also got an Opportunity to attend the childhood cancer group Trust meeting with patients and parents and it was a wonderful Opportunity to directly interact with Adult RB patients and share their experience.

I also visited one of the National artificial eye center involved in making and fitting artificial eyes.

There were also teaching sessions on Thursdays and I also gave a presentation on Eye in Metabolic disorders.

The team at Birmingham was very hospitable and I felt at home.

### **Future Collaboration**

The Birmingham unit is also very supportive and has been very positive in further collaborating and guiding Lumbini eye Institute to establish a RB unit.

### **Exchange Fellowship Program**

They have also been positive on an exchange fellowship program where a fellow from Lumbini Eye institute would be spending 2 / 3 months in Birmingham and a Fellow from Birmingham would spend 2/ 3 months at LEI. This will give the fellow an experience to work in developing country and vice versa in a developed country. Such a program is likely to commence in April / May 2010.

### **Visit at Great Ormond Street Hospital**

Since it is very difficult financially to travel to U.K again, I made this opportunity to observe also at Great Ormond Street Hospital, London one of the reputed institute for Pediatric Ophthalmology. I spent 10 days there and learnt the finer nuances in Pediatric eye care.

### **Tourism**

The visit to U.K gave me an Opportunity to visit some of the worlds best tourist centers.

I had visited London and was amazed by the spectacular Thames, London Eye, and Wax museum. I visited the British museum and amazed by the amount of collections they had kept.

I also visited the Cadbury factory at Bourneville, an example for work ethics. I also visited Moorfields Eye hospital it was inspiring to see the worlds first ophthalmic Hospital.

I also got the opportunity to do punting at Cambridge when I went to attend the conference. I also visited the birth place and residence of the great William Shakespeare and the great fiction Detective character Sherlock Homes.

It was a blessing in disguise as I was able to meet some of my friends in U.K after many years.

The trip not only provided me training but also, I got the good network for providing Retinoblastoma service back at Nepal and also provided me an opportunity to visit places and good old friends.

I am Very Thankful to the Birmingham team and Dr.Manoj for his enormous support and guidance.

### **The Down side or Drawbacks**

It would have been even more useful, if I had had hands on experience in treating patients. Nevertheless it was wonderful for 3 months even as an Observer.

Some of the major difficulties that I had to face were the enormous time taken to process as I had got the award in January 2009 but I got my visa only in July after initial rejection of the VISA. It was a very emotional moment to get the visa finally after a long struggle. It took away some of the significant time involved in preparing for the training. Mr. Manoj despite his Medical leave took enormous efforts to ensure that I was there at the earliest possible.

However I am glad that the new regulations that have come now from the U.K border agency, which have made even more difficult for Ophthalmologists from developing and underdeveloped countries for such a training program have come after I as awarded.

As FRCS Glasgow was not a GMC registered Sponsor, I was not able to apply for GMC registration and hence Hands on experience was not possible. I wish that GMC recognizes FRCS Glasgow, which has been one of the leaders in providing quality Physicians and surgeons to this world as a GMC registered Sponsor, so that the candidates in future could make use of the best.