

David Murdoch Travelling Fellowship Award

Report on Interventional Fellowship at Institut

Cardiovasculaire Paris Sud (ICPS);

October 2006- November 2007

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I spent 13 months at Institut Cardiovasculaire Paris Sud (ICPS). I was privileged to be part funded by the David Murdoch travelling fellowship and in the following paragraphs I recount my experiences of this fellowship.

Institut Cardiovasculaire Paris Sud (ICPS) is formed by two centres. These are contained within and operate from two separate private hospitals. The main centre is in Institut Hospitalier Jacques Cartier at Massy (greater Parisian suburb). This has 3 cardiac catheter labs. There are 5 consultant interventional cardiologists and 1 paediatric cardiologist which essentially run this department. The second centre is in the region of Quincy Sous Senart (approximately 20 miles away) and is situated in Hopital Claude Galien. This centre contains two cardiac catheter labs largely under the supervision of 3 interventional cardiologists. I spent 5 months in Quincy sous Senart and 7 months in Massy. The health service and organisation in France is very different to the UK; the interventional cardiologists only perform procedures that are requested of them by non-invasive 'cardiologues' and 'medecin traitants' based in the community. There is no follow-up or clinics undertaken but rather the referring physicians undertake this and re-refer if necessary.

On average there were 7 sessions for percutaneous coronary intervention and 1-2 sessions for research. There was considerable emphasis on research and the need for abstract submission and presentation. The director of the fellowship program is Dr. Phillippe Garot. He is a young interventional cardiologist and was hugely supportive and encouraging for all the fellows. (See picture- inset) He co-ordinated the fellowship program and was always available for advice; both from a professional and personal point of view. Another hugely important individual was Catherine Dupic (librarian and translator) who generally was sympathetic to all fellows and gave very important advice.

The practise of interventional cardiology is quite aggressive at ICPS and generally different to the UK (and indeed other regions in France). This does mean exposure and training in the performance of fairly difficult angioplasty procedures. The radial approach is favoured here by nearly all the operators. There is considerable multi-vessel PCI being undertaken. There is recognition that ICPS is a centre of excellence in treating bifurcation lesions. (Lesions occurring in areas where the artery splits into two sizable branches) and I was able to gain considerable experience in this important aspect of interventional cardiology. As a testimony to the status of ICPS as one of the premier interventional cardiology centres in Europe, there were regular 2 day workshops in topics such as percutaneous treatment of bifurcation lesions and chronic total occlusions (organised by the consultants and various company sponsors). Interventional cardiologists throughout Europe attended these workshops to be updated in latest techniques/tips/tricks. The fellows were able to attend the lectures and the practical sessions which was a very useful educational exercise.

There is quite a range of intervention undertaken at ICPS such as the treatment of left main stem lesions, percutaneous aortic valve implantation and septal alcohol ablation for the treatment of hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy. The two centres at ICPS are often a testing ground for new devices and novel technology/material. It is clear that the fellows cannot be primary operators in some of these procedures but I was granted an insight into cutting edge technology and possibly the future practise of

interventional cardiology. One interesting feature about the work at ICPS was that the cardiologists not only undertook interventional procedures but also provided a service for imaging in the form of magnetic resonance imaging and multislice coronary CT. The fellows contributed to this by being involved in the reporting of at least one session per week. During the thirteen months I gained considerable exposure and experience in the use of cardiac MRI to screen for coronary artery disease and to further investigate cardiomyopathies.

Generally speaking the overall work atmosphere was quite pleasant. However the stress at times was considerable in keeping with a tertiary centre undertaking advanced angioplasty whilst at the same time being heavily involved in research, presentations at meetings and live courses transmitted to major conferences such as EUROPCR and TCT. The nurses who work at ICPS are both highly experienced and extremely friendly and do look out for the fellows. This was a great help to all the fellows who attended during the year 2006-07 (5 in total). The ability to communicate in French fluently is important for anyone wishing to work in ICPS and it is now formally tested by Catherine Dupic (translator and librarian, ICPS). My French was semi-fluent on arrival and it was clear to me that my confidence increased over the year as a direct result of a gradual improvement in French. By the end I was quite au fait not only with the traditional French language but also all the many idioms that made my life quite difficult at the start.

One year as a fellow significantly enhanced my technical skills and has granted me much greater confidence in the practise of interventional cardiology. I believe this has made me much better equipped to practise as an interventional cardiologist in the UK. If ones progress has been satisfactory a diploma/certificate is issued to fellows at the end of their fellowship. For those who wish to enhance their experience and confidence before taking on a consultant interventional cardiologist post I would thoroughly recommend a one year fellowship in interventional cardiology in ICPS. Of course from the cultural aspect, Paris is a hugely enjoyable place to live and work.

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The author (2nd from right) with some of the staff at ICPS (Claude Galien Hospital)



The author (left) with director of fellowship training at ICPS Dr Phillipe Garot