

Report of the Travelling Fellowship

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I received a travelling fellowship from the BSGE in 2018 and I decided to spend a month in the Clermont-Ferrand, France. Clermont-Ferrand is a small provincial town which is more famous for Michelin Tyres and the ancient French Hero *Vercingetorix* who defeated the Roman (Children's comic hero Asterix was created after him).

The Gynaecology department in Clermont Ferrand is a world-renowned training centre for endoscopic surgery. Its training centre, CICE (The International Centre for Endoscopic Surgery) --- organises regular training sessions for international students in partnership with the University of Auvergne and has strong research and development team. I did my Diploma in 2014-2015 in Gynaecology Endoscopy from CICE and University of Auvergne and was very much influenced by the passion for gynaecologic endoscopic surgery. I decided to spend a month as visiting fellow to watch the team in action. My aim was to observe the systematic approach to laparoscopic procedure and to lateral pelvic walls in complicated endometriosis surgery. I was also interested in laparoscopic myomectomy.

As it is a highly sought-after training centre, I needed to plan eighteen months in advance. There are many different levels of fellowship depending on the length of time spent. I decided to spend a month. Communication with the department was mainly through email (thanks to my non-existent skill in French vocabulary!) which was always prompt and helpful.

I arrived during the major festive period in Easter which was also plagued by the transport strike in France! I was welcomed by the team which was then preparing for a major event --- the first world congress --- 'Beyond Gynaecologic Surgery'. The three-day conference was attended by many famous names of the gynae endoscopic surgery in the world!

I joined a group of international fellows who worked along-side the French trainees. There were fellows from Italy, Brazil, Spain, Morocco, Bahrain and Singapore and other parts of France – a truly cosmopolitan group.

There are three all-day gynae theatres every day of the week. As a tertiary referral centre, it treats many cases of complicated endometriosis and gynaecology cancers. All the theatres are **OR 1** developed by Karl Storz as it is a dedicated centre for them to try their developing technologies and instruments. I found the whole team very welcoming to the international fellows despite the language barrier. Anaesthetists, nurses and trainees were very tolerant to the fellows vying for the best views of the surgery! I have seen many complicated surgeries in endometriosis, urogynaecology and gynaecological oncology. There is a close link to the training centre of CICE which was further away from the hospital along the tram line. There was ample opportunity to practice in the dry and wet labs.

Weekends were long but spent in occasional outing with other fellows and exploring nearby extinct volcanoes --- most notably, the *Puy de Dome*.

Overall, I felt I achieved my objective by gaining a thorough insight of their systematic approach. I observed many endometriosis surgeries and urogynaecology procedures to gain a thorough understanding of the principles of approach to lateral pelvic wall. I have seen many laparoscopic myomectomies which they very successfully perform without using any morcellation. In addition, I very much enjoyed the international mix of fellows from different parts of the world. I thank BSGE for this award of Travelling Fellowship to enrich my experience which I will be able to incorporate in my practice.

---- Kausik Das