

---

# CLINICAL SPINE FELLOWSHIP REPORT 2018

Dr Aiyer Siddharth Narasimhan

**Duchess of Kent Children's Hospital and Queen Mary Hospital,  
Hong Kong**



**Duration of fellowship:** 1<sup>st</sup> January to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018

“LEARNING IS AN EXPERIENCE. EVERYTHING ELSE IS JUST INFORMATION”

-ALBERT EINSTEIN

My fellowship at the Duchess of Kent Children’s hospital and Queen Mary hospital has given me a rich and invaluable learning experience, that I take back having completed this program. This 6-month fellowship offers an excellent opportunity for budding spine surgeons to train at one of the leading spine units, managing challenging cases in paediatric and adult spinal deformity. Having said this, the fellowship had the right mix of exposure to basic degenerative spine surgery and thus offered an extremely rounded training opportunity. Firstly, I would like to thank the Department of Orthopaedics and Traumatology for this opportunity and all the members at the spine unit at Hong Kong for making my fellowship a memorable experience.



**Department photo on the 30<sup>th</sup> May in the A R Hodgson Library**

As a fellow in the spine unit I got an opportunity to be involved in every aspect of the daily working of the unit. My responsibilities included conducting out-patient clinic, in-patient assessment, preoperative surgical work-up, performing basic spine surgery and assisting in a variety of complex spine procedures. I would like to highlight some of my learning experiences during the course of the fellowship.

### Scoliosis clinic

I enjoyed conducting the scoliosis clinic at DKCH every week. The scoliosis screening program offers a chance to see the natural history and progression of adolescent idiopathic scoliosis. The success and failure of a good bracing program can be easily grasped during the clinic. The utility of the fulcrum bending x-ray in clinical decision making for selection of fusion levels was new concept, that I learnt during by fellowship. The clinic offers a comprehensive program with active participation from the Orthotics unit and the physiotherapy unit. This collective management by each department of the clinic helps in a better understanding of the management in AIS.

### Grand rounds

The grand rounds form the true essence of the learning experience during the fellowship. It offers a chance for the fellow to present the clinical scenario to all members during an in-patient evaluation. The advantage of such an interaction is the valuable insight I gained as a doctor in terms of the assessment by the physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Dr Wong and Prof Cheung would then discuss the all critical points pertaining to the clinical assessment and decision making. This was an excellent training module where the fellow experiences a complete and thorough assessment of the clinical condition/spinal deformity



### Preoperative meeting

The spine unit would also discuss the operative plan for all surgeries conducted at QMH and DKCH. The pre-operative presentation would be discussed with all the members of the unit attending. This meeting would result in a collective decision-making process. The assessment of the critical steps for the surgery and rationale of the surgical decision making was a great avenue to pick up numerous learning point, as also tips and tricks for good surgical outcomes.

### Visiting Professorship and the Hong Kong International Orthopaedic Forum

I was lucky to have two visiting Professor sessions during my tenure. Prof Jean-Charles Le Huec was a faculty at the 15<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong International Orthopaedic Forum conference. It was an excellent chance to interact with him during the case discussion, ward rounds and discuss sagittal balance in greater detail. I also had the pleasure to listen to Prof Shoichi Kokubun talk on *Myogelotic Sensitization* and the *K point* for muscle pain.



**Photographs with Prof Jean-Charles Le Huec (on the left) and with Prof Shoichi Kokubun (on the right)**

### **Hong Kong The City**

Hong Kong is busy and bustling city, however contrary to this thought, the area of Sandy bay is quite and calm. The hospital is situated on the bay side and offers a beautiful sunset view, which is extremely scenic. The city offers a variety of cuisines and I thoroughly enjoyed indulging in a wide array of cuisines. I also grew extremely fond of Dim Sum especially one called 'Lau sa lai wong bao'. I was happy to take time off to enjoy sightseeing attractions in Hong Kong like the 'Big Buddha', Ocean Park and one the best being the breath-taking view of the Hong Kong skyline from "The Peak".



**Photographs at the Buddha Statue (L) on Lantau island and the view of Hong Kong skyline at dusk from the peak**

## Acknowledgments

I am very grateful to Prof Kenneth Cheung and Dr Yat Wa Wong for the opportunity to pursue this fellowship and for your valuable guidance and teaching. A big thank you to my academic/surgical instructors Dr Kenny Kwan, Dr Jason Cheung and Dr Paul Koljonen for training and supervising me during the surgical procedures. Dr Colin Yung and Dr Kevin Fok for sharing the responsibilities in the ward and helping me explore the many eateries in Kennedy Town with great food. I would like to thank Ms April Cheung and Ms May Ng for all their support and help during the process of my application and during the tenure of my fellowship.



**Spine division photo Duchess of Kent Children's Hospital and Queen Mary Hospital**