

## Fellow's Review for Hand and Microsurgery Fellowship in the Department of Orthopaedics, Queen Mary Hospital

I am Dr. Claire Marie Durban, a graduate of the Orthopedic Residency Program of the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital. During my training, I developed an interest in the disease of the hand and upper extremity, as well as in arthroscopy and sports medicine. Prior to coming to Hong Kong, I have already done a fellowship in shoulder surgery and arthroscopy. However, I pursued the hand and microsurgery fellowship to receive subspecialized training in hand, wrist, and soft tissue microsurgery. I expected to participate in patient care, to be able to do surgeries first hand, and to follow up the patients as they heal.

At the Queen Mary Hospital (QMH), I was fortunate to have worked with great mentors who worked on a variety of cases from acute trauma to reconstructive surgery, which was very advantageous for both the resident trainee and the fellow. We also took care of children with congenital hand and upper extremity deformities, and those with cerebral palsy, which gave me a good exposure to the challenges and intricacies of the treatment strategies for these children.

I was allowed to do surgeries as the primary surgeon, of course, under the supervision of the consultant. Our most common surgeries are carpal tunnel release and trigger finger release, but we also did a variety of other nerve decompression and soft tissue release. As we dealt with patients of all age groups, we had a number of hand and wrist arthritis, both degenerative and rheumatic, and I was exposed to the various approaches to relieve pain, provide stability, and ultimately, to improve the quality of life.

What I appreciate the most during my fellowship is the exposure and active participation in the post-operative rehabilitation of the patients, side by side with the physiotherapists and occupational therapists. While there was a frank language barrier between me and a lot of the patients, the allied health professionals, as well as the residents, helped the communication between me and my patients. We see patients enrolled in the affiliate rehabilitation center at least once a week to view their progress, and actively discuss the case with the patient.

All in all, I highly recommend this fellowship programme to those who are interested in pursuing further training in hand surgery and the rehabilitative care of patients with disease of the hand and upper extremity.