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At the outset, I would like to thank the Federation of European Societies for Surgery of the Hand for the junior travel grant to undertake a visit to the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive surgery, Erasmus MC, Rotterdam, Netherlands.

The Erasmus MC (medical center) is the university hospital of the city of Rotterdam, The Netherlands. It is affiliated with the Erasmus University. It ranks as the top European institution in clinical medicine according to the Times Higher Education with 7108 publications, 166,015 citations with 23.36 citations per paper covering the period from January 1998 through December 2008 as indexed by Thomson Reuters.

The hospital has three locations: Erasmus MC, the main location, Erasmus MC - Sophia, the hospital for children and Daniel den Hoed, the location for cancer patients. It is a Level I trauma center and includes all other special

units including neurosurgery, cardiothoracic surgery, plastic, neonatal and pediatric surgery, intensive care and pediatric oncology.

This visit was an excellent opportunity to observe children's hand deformity correction surgery and micro vascular surgery of the hand and wrist. The operative exposure was very good. I assisted Prof Hovius' and his team in cases like reconstruction of triphalangeal thumb, tendon reconstruction for hereditary Sensory motor neuropathy (type 1) affecting hand and forearm and reconstruction for radial club hand. I also attended theatre with Dr. Henk Coert who has a special interest in management of patients with nerve disorders.

I attended subspecialty clinics like hand surgery/rehabilitation consultation at the Sophia Children's hospital with Prof Hovius, Mrs. Dr. Christianne van Nieuwenhoven, hand surgeon and Dr. Wim Janssen, rehabilitation physician. It was wonderful opportunity to see assessment of young children with congenital hand and forearm deformities like radial club hand, accessory digits and triphalangeal thumb. I also attended special nerve disorders clinic with Dr. Erik Walbheem during the Hand surgeon/rehabilitation consultation for adult patients.

I visited Diakonessenhuis hospital in Zeist to attend theatre with Dr. Thybout Moojen and Dr. Reinier Feitz. I met their team at the hospital to plan the set up of my research project on patients with proximal row carpectomy.

This visit has also allowed me to set up a collaborative research project with the research unit in Rotterdam and Zeist on functional outcome of proximal row carpectomy comparing wrist arthrodesis with motion preserving surgery of wrist for osteoarthritis. My aim is to assess these cases to understand the influence on strength and range of movements and compare with four-corner fusion and total wrist fusion. This project started in November 2010 and data collection will be completed by January 2011.

In the course of one of the afternoons, I was invited to the departmental beach party, especially organized by the PhD students attached to the department. They put together an excellent show of creativity with a video of their imitation of mannerisms of the colleagues.

I also met the research team that supports the work of the department of the plastic surgery at Erasmus. Department has facilities for motion tracking and digital hand strength measurement besides other routine research equipment available. I was introduced to their recent achievements especially with the assessment of the circumduction of the thumb (Pollexograph) and the Rotterdam Intrinsic Hand Myometer (RIHM). Surgeons regularly visit the plastic surgery and oncology division in the hospital from different parts of the world (recently from Australia and India).

I would strongly encourage fellow trainees in hand and plastic surgery with interest in congenital hand and nerve disorders to avail such grants for a visit to the Rotterdam unit during their higher surgical training. It broadens horizons and provides excellent exposure to children's hand deformity correction surgery in a world-class centre.