



## FESSH Traveling Award 2012

### Klinik für Plastische Chirurgie und

### Handchirurgie UniversitätsSpital Zürich



*dr. Judit Réka Hetthéssy*

*Department of Hand Surgery  
Trauma Center Péterfy Sándor Hospital  
Budapest, Hungary*



#### Introduction

The FESSH Traveling Award 2012 provided me with the opportunity to visit, and take part in the day-to-day routine of the UniversitätsSpital Zürich for six weeks under the supervision of Dr. med. Maurizio Calcagni. This is a University Hospital in Zürich, with a Department dedicated to Hand and Plastic Surgery, lead by Prof. Dr. med. P. Giovanoli. First of all I would like to thank Dr. Calcagni, and every member of his team for their patience, guidance and willingness to teach.

#### Overview

One of the greatest assets of this department is that there is a great variety of profiles, ranging from routine traumatology cases, to classical hand surgical cases, to more special profiles, such as brachial plexus injuries, local and free-flaps.



One of the most interesting profiles of the Department for me was nerve surgery, ranging from neurolysis to neuroma treatment, to peripheral neurotization following brachial plexus injuries. One of the other strong assets of the Department was the close cooperation with specialist from other fields, in these cases for example with a neurologist, who was available for consultation, and participated during certain types of surgeries, where his expertise were required (brachial plexus injuries). It was especially gratifying to observe, that many aspects of a certain disease was explored by the extended hand surgical team. The management of neuromas for example ranged from the most recent forms of conservative treatment, and pain medicine, to classic forms of surgery (neurolysis, grafting, etc), to the cutting edge (stem cell injection). Knowledge and equipment were available for all forms of treatment. Quite fascinating.

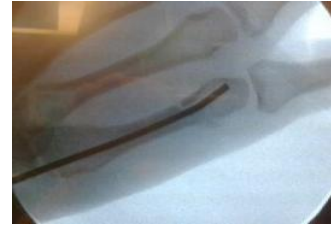
Another fine example of interdisciplinary cooperation was the close working relationship between the Department, and the dedicated hand therapist team. Hand therapist were not only available within the hospital, but biweekly meetings were held to review patient progress, and raise concerns. I think this contributes strongly to the quality of patient care.



It was also interesting to see, that hand surgeons routinely performed local and free-flap surgeries on both upper and lower extremities. As the hospital provided care for a vast area for burn and traumatology patients, these cases were quite frequent.



Classic hand surgical procedures were performed with elegance and care, providing supervision to learning hand surgeons to master the necessary skills.

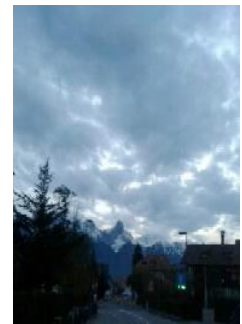


One of the fascinating aspects of my visit was to be able to come into close contact with the cutting edge instruments, equipment, materials and technology available to hand surgeons today. Instruments and equipment were both top-of-the-line, and well maintained, and the theater staff was well educated in the use of even the newest equipment. The availability of such a wide range of options in everything from materials to technique seemed to force



the surgeons working have both up-to-date knowledge, and good decision making skills. It was also a pleasure to observe the system of teaching here, as trainees of all levels were well-supervised, but also strongly encouraged to learn to make independent clinical decisions. Young surgeons were also encouraged to take on extracurricular research projects, participate at the weekly journal club, and scientific meetings.

The conclusion of my visit coincided with the 46. Jahreskongress Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Handchirurgie (SGH) / 14. CH-Kongress Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Handrehabilitation (SGHR), at which I was able to participate. The meeting was of high professional level, concentrating on current advancements in hand surgery, and out-of-the-ordinary cases. All in all an inspiring event, at –needless to say – lovely venue on the shores of Lake Thun.



#### Conclusion

The visit helped me have a better understanding of the basics of hand anatomy and function, procedures, the opportunity to come in contact with cutting edge technology, and I think above all gave me insight into the clinical decision making processes of a skilled and experienced hand surgeon. For his patience I again think Dr. Calcagni.

*I would like to thank FESSH for the unique learning opportunity that the Travel Award provided me, with the hope that it will be an ongoing opportunity that other aspiring hand surgeons may take advantage of in the future.*

*dr. Judit Reka Hetthessy*