

Feedback on the International Bursary Award of The Surgical Foundation 2011

I am grateful to have been one of the recipients of the International Bursary Award of the Surgical Foundation, a charitable arm of the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland (ASGBI), 2011. I was the only award winner from West Africa region of the 12 of us who attended the ASGBI International Surgical Congress 2011 themed: The 21st Century Surgery held at Bournemouth, England from 11th to 13th May, 2011.

I arrived in United Kingdom (UK) on Sunday 8th of May, 2011 to an accommodation reserved for me by the Foundation at the Royal Exeter Hotel, Bournemouth. Though I missed the welcome brief by Ms Bhavnita, my colleagues delivered the message.

The congress was preceded by 2 days clinical observership at local hospital on the 9th & 10th May. My group visited the Southampton University Hospital on the first day where we were warmly received by Professor John Primrose and guided by Mr James Hopkins. We observed surgical procedures via laparoscopic means (total Gastrectomy, herniotomy & orchidopexy), emergency surgical care and insertion of sacral nerve stimulator. On day 2 we attended the Basingstoke/ North Hampshire Hospital and we were received by Mr Thomas Cecil. We observed pseudomyxoma peritonei operation. These 2 centers brought to light the technological advancement and availability of material resources for patients' care which are real challenges in the developing world.

The Surgical Congress started on Wednesday 11th May. This year's congress was unique in incorporating four other associations running parallel congresses at the same venue. The organization was perfect posing challenges at choosing the desired sessions to participate. The Helen Rollason Memorial lecture: Surgery and Colorectal Cancer: New Paradigms was elucidating. I was privilege to participate in the 21st Century Surgery Training in Laparoscopic Suturing, Stapling and Fixation Techniques which stimulated my interest more in this newly developing field at my centre. Threats to Professionalism was a thought provoking session. The inaugural Bland- Sutton lecture titled General Surgery: The Death or Rebirth of a Specialty? Gave more support to the last topic. It was also interesting to know that general surgery experience seems to be the same irrespective of the continent.

Are there new changes or challenges in Anastomotic Problems in Colorectal Surgery? Hernia scientific sessions were stimulating enough for me who wish to be trained on the laparoscopic techniques. 21st Century Surgery in Africa delivered by one of my teachers was one that calls for means of closing the wide technological gaps between the developed and the developing world. How I wished more resources can be channeled towards this. The exhibition sessions were educative enough in exposing and propelling one into the technological firm of the 21st century.

The presentation of our Bursary Award was done on Friday the 13th of May. This provided an interactive session with ASGBI and International Development Committee executives. I appreciate this honor.

It was not all academics as we were hosted to a warm welcome reception during which the Congress was formally declared open on Wednesday by Lord Robert Winston, a pioneer emeritus on fertility research. We had an entertaining Annual Gala Dinner where I met eminent surgeons with who we exchange experiences. The hotel accommodation was good and the people were hospitable. We were able to walk round the town on sightseeing. I met a classmate of mine and others at the congress.

My appreciation goes to the International Development Committee of ASGBI by extension who selected me for the award. I am personally grateful to Miss (now Mrs) Bhavnita for her unrelenting assistance all along. Everyone has been wonderful.

I will encourage the association to continue with this good innovation while increasing the quota of West African awardees. It will be more rewarding if the local observership period can be increased. I will appreciate it if the association aid in our training by linking us with members for few weeks training in the fields of interest. It will be good if the ASGBI can form alliance with our local association in assisting with surgical development at our local environments and for exchange program established. I will suggest a session open to one of the awardees to present local experience or challenge at his centre.

I really appreciate the program and the knowledge and challenges impacted to me. Keep on the good work ASGBI.

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