



Report on the Association of Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland International Bursary Award, 2009

Dr Wycliffe Otsianyi

I have had the privilege of being invited to attend the Annual Surgical Congress of ASGBI as a guest of the Association under their International Bursary Award Scheme. I learnt about the congress and the international bursary through the local representatives of Ethicon and Johnson and Johnson. I applied for this to enable me attend the congress as a trainee surgeon in the management of gastroenterological diseases.

My objectives for attending the congress were

1. The theme "Delivering a modern surgical service" was relevant to enhancing my perception of where surgery has reached and is going to in the future compared to where we are situated in Kenya and Africa.
2. The observer opportunity in a UK hospital would also give me a chance to see the holistic and practical practice on the ground.
3. That lessons learned would impact on surgical practice back at home with modernization being the theme.
4. Help me shape up conference organization back home as a member of the surgical society of Kenya.

Hospital Visit

On Monday we visited the Royal Hospital Alexandra, where we met a more than kind Mr. Ken Mitchell waiting for us. We had been informed about the intended two day visit to an NHS District hospital in Scotland to see firsthand how the hospital is run.

Mr. Mitchell introduced us and informed us about the events for the day. We began with attending the colorectal unit's multidisciplinary meeting (MDTs) on management of various diseases. I was amazed by the easy interaction and friendliness of the meeting. I hope such openness and respect could transpire back home... where MDTs if held are opportunities to show off. I was also appreciative of the much use of technology, the hospitals interconnectivity and the use of videoconferencing to discuss the cases with consultants in other institutions.

After the MDT I had the opportunity to attend operating room procedures with Mr. Porteus, Consultant Colorectal Surgeon, who took me through various colonoscopies on his list. We also engaged in very lively discussions about management of cases. I was quite impressed with the kind of efficiency shown by the staff during the procedures and how well team work seemed to be running at the institution. This is a major lesson we have to learn back home.

The following day, I was introduced to Mr. McKirdy, Consultant Breast Surgeon, whom I also had wide range of discussions about breast disease services and how to optimize care. I was also able to observe a number of operations in his theatre. Everyone seemed to know their responsibilities and carried them out well.

Later on, Mr. Renwick allowed us to use the endotrainer simulator for laparoscopy and endoscopy. This really brought to life the idea of simulation as an initial step to training, especially in endocavitary surgery. It thus alerted me to importance of convergence of technology and patient care.

The hospital visit was quite an eye opener and I believe was also highly motivating for many of us. It came to an end too soon.

International Surgical Congress

The three day conference held at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre was also a great occasion. I was able to attend several podium presentations, poster presentations and exhibitions.

Some of the highlights I would mention include

- A good number of well classified parallel sessions that enabled one to select an activity of choice to attend
- The ability of presenters to exactly keep to time allocated was nice to observe
- The standards of the papers presented was very high and is a credit to the scientific committee
- The discussion on the way forward in surgical training is very close to my heart
- It was great to sit in the audience and listen to a motivational talk by Dr. Willie McBride
- The incorporation of taught lectures in an international conference was a new idea to me
- The video/ DVD sessions presented were quite enlightening
- The discussion on particular experiences under the session of 'A bad day on call'
- The overseas surgical fellowship discussions on delivering a surgical service in a conflict environment. This was very important and quite informative for me whom occasionally normal duty is actually a service in a conflict zone

On Friday we had the honour of being hosted at an International Bursary Awards Reception at the SECC. Here I was able to discuss a wide range of issues with distinguished officials of

the ASQBI. Notable was the direction surgical training opportunities are taking in the UK and the opportunities available to associates from the developing world. I learnt the European Union rules have led to diminishing availability of these learning opportunities. This is sad as there is loss of opportunity for skill and technology transfer to developing world and cultural ties are further lost. I believe the issue should be whether the trainee intends to emigrate to Europe, but where one intends to return to service back home opportunities should continue being availed. ASQBI probably should put a case for training as an exchange program, where fellows from UK have elective training in the developing world where case load is massive, and developing world trainees also have the opportunity in UK and Europe where skills and technology are consummate.

Overall my experience was worthwhile and very eye opening. I would thus make the following recommendations and requests.

1. The International Bursary awards to attend the ASQBI congress is very useful and should be strengthened to get more participants.
2. More effort is put into achieving wider availability for training not necessarily pegged to formal training positions. This would be comparable to attachments done by the Overseas surgical fellowship, in which case, trainee surgeons from developing countries may get attachment on short-term basis of 3-6 months in particular fields and acquire certain skills and expertise.
3. ASQBI could also look into formal links with surgical associations in the developing world and the commonwealth. This could be strengthened via the Overseas Surgical Fellowship program the association undertakes.

Yours Sincerely

Dr. Wyckliffe Kaisha Otsianyi