

BSGE Trainees Travelling Fellowship Recipient Report

Surgeon: Dr Charles Koh

Centre: Reproductive Specialty Centre, Milwaukee, USA

Period: July 2015

I am extremely grateful to the BSGE for the award of this travelling fellowship to visit Dr Charles Koh in Milwaukee. Dr Koh specialises in advanced laparoscopic surgery and has created many innovations and techniques in this field. He has collaborated with Storz to design the KOH Ultramicro Instruments, which is currently the only set of instruments available for laparoscopic microsurgery. His centre performed the world's first laparoscopic microsurgical tubal anastomosis using 4-mm laparoscope and 3 mm microinstruments and more recently pioneered the world's first total laparoscopic hysterectomy using microinstruments.

My trip was extremely well organised and would not have been possible without the help of Dr Koh's secretary, Marlene. Marlene was instrumental in coordinating my visit with Dr Koh's busy schedule and had even arranged hotel accommodation for my stay!

For the last six months, Dr Koh has reduced his clinical practice in Milwaukee to one week a month. This made my visit even more intense with busy clinics and surgeries. Dr Koh operates in theatres with two regular nurse surgical assistants and one rotating resident (SHO or junior Registrar grade). It was stimulating to watch such an experienced surgeon tackle different surgical challenges. I was particularly impressed with his versatility in the use of different energy modalities including the KTP laser, ERBE electrocautery and his arsenal of 3 & 3.5mm microsurgical instruments in combination with CARVALHO trocars. I was able to observe the inventor himself use his different innovations and perform suturing effortlessly. When Dr Koh was not operating, I also had the opportunity to observe Dr Grace Janik, a close colleague of Dr Koh, operate. It was enlightening to observe how extensively both surgeons would dissect to treat pelvic endometriosis and also how regularly they would perform bowel suturing. They did require the assistance of a urologist on one occasion when it came to ureteric re-anastomosis.

Milwaukee is a beautiful city that lies along the shores of Lake Michigan and is known for its brewing traditions, with its German and Polish roots. Each summer, the city would host one of the largest music festivals in the world called 'Summerfest'. I was particularly fortunate that my trip coincided with part of this summer celebration.

I have gained a better understanding of the US healthcare system especially with its recent changes since the Obama administration. It has also been a great opportunity to meet US trainees to discuss their training structures and hear about their challenges with training.

My visit has exceeded all my expectations. Dr Koh and his team welcomed me and made me feel a part of their team. Dr Koh has been an amazing host during my visit and I look forward to paying back his kindness during his next visit to the UK.

William (Wee-Liak) Hoo