



ASIA PACIFIC ORTHOPAEDIC ASSOCIATION (APOA)

Report for EFORT-APOA travelling fellowship 2018

Kar Teoh and Michiel Siebelt were very privileged to be selected to represent EFORT as an exchange fellow to the 20th Congress of the Asia Pacific Orthopaedic Association (APOA). The congress took place in Antalya, Turkey, from 10 to 14 April 2018 (Figure 1). However, the actual fellowship started on 7th April and we joined nine Young Ambassadors selected by APOA centrally with two other fellows selected by SICOT, making it a total of thirteen young ambassadors. This represents the largest cohort of young ambassadors in the history of APOA. This was the first time EFORT and SICOT fellows joined this excellent young ambassadors' programme of APOA, which has been officially running since 2007.

APOA was formed in 1962 as the Western Pacific Orthopaedic Association. This has grown over the years to include more countries in the Asia Pacific region and in 2000, the name was changed to Asia Pacific Orthopaedic Association to reflect this. APOA has 22 member chapters, which includes Australia, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam. At this congress, they have voted to add Saudi Arabia as the latest member chapter. This is one of the world's biggest Orthopaedics organization in terms of both member numbers and geography. The aim of APOA is to foster and develop teaching, education and research in Orthopaedics and Traumatology.



Figure 1. Old town of Antalya

Both of us arrived on 7th April 2018 (Saturday) to Antalya Airport and our accommodation was a five-star all-inclusive full board beach resort hotel. The first day was for everyone to get into Antalya from all parts of the world and to get to know each other better. The nine APOA young ambassadors were from Australia (Sam Adie), Bangladesh (Sharif Ahmed

Jonayed), Hong Kong (Henry Fu Chun Him), India (Raja Bhaskar), Indonesia (Mohammad Adib Khumaedi), Japan (Kenji Kawamura), Malaysia (Shams Amir Shamsul Bahar), Pakistan (Ayeesha Saeed), and Turkey (Yavuz Sağlam). The two SICOT fellows (Vishnu Senthil Kumar, Tarun Verma) were from India. We all had different sub-specialty interests and came from different cultural backgrounds which made the experience very enriching.

The second day of the programme was chaired by Prof. Alpay Merter Özenci who gave several interesting lectures on sport injuries. Prof. Haluk Özcanli also gave a talk on 'How to manage finger-tip injuries' and his preferred technique – the innervated digital artery perforator flap which he has published widely in. This was followed by several interesting case discussions which we greatly benefited from. We are very grateful to both of them for taking their precious Sunday out to host this excellent educational experience for the young ambassadors.

The next two days were spent at Antalya's Orthopaedics and Trauma centre of excellence called Antalya Eğitim ve Araştırma Hastanesi (Antalya Education and Research Hospital). This is the biggest public university hospital in Antalya with 1600 beds (Figure 2). It is also a Level 1 trauma centre. We were warmly welcomed by their public relations team and we observed many surgeries over the 2 days. Some of us even scrubbed up for cases. They specially prepared the operating lists to cater to our different sub-specialty needs. Both of us particularly enjoyed the complex infective non-union cases performed by Dr. Farhat Guler. These included 1) a second stage Masquelet technique for infected tibial psuedoarthrosis, 2) resection of infected tibial psuedoarthrosis, with acute shortening and application of circular hexapod frame for lengthening, and 3) femoral lengthening with magnetic femoral nail for a lady with post traumatic 7cm shortening. We joined them for an appetizing local Turkish lunch on both days in their staff canteen. Special thanks need to go to Dr. Özkan Köse who was instrumental in the organization of this amazing two day programme and for being ever so accommodating, friendly and helpful (Figure 3). Apart from showing us around the hospital and explaining the Turkish healthcare system to us, he also doubled up as a local tour guide on the second day to give us a quick tour of the Antalya Old City. The chief executive also met with us and presented us with some hospital souvenirs at the end of our second day to commemorate our visit (Figure 4).



Figure 2. Antalya Eğitim ve Araştırma Hastanesi



Figure 3. In theatre with Dr Köse and other ambassadors



Figure 4. With the chief executive, Dr. Köse and other ambassadors

The next four days were spent at the APOA congress. The scientific quality of the congress was very high with keynote and plenary lectures given by distinguished speakers from across the world. Both of us really enjoyed all the lectures but two lectures left an impression on us. The first is 'Revival and Renewal' given by Prof. Eiji Itoi of Japan talking about the aftermath of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear plant explosions in 2011 in his country and the second is 'Medicine for whose benefit?' by Prof. Shanmuganathan Rajasekaran of India talking about how the implant and pharmaceutical industry affects the medical profession.

On the second day of the congress, the afternoon session was dedicated to the Young Surgeons. The first part was a forum, which was chaired jointly by Prof. David Choon (Current APOA president) and Prof. Ted Mah (Immediate past APOA president) which reflected how important they felt about the educational and training experience of the Young Surgeons in the APOA region. This gave rise to interesting discussions on the different experiences in the young surgeons programme in EFORT, SICOT and APOA and how we could learn from each other and possibly integrate the programme. Both Ted Mah and Jamal Ashraf (Secretary General APOA) also gave us a short talk on their previous experience as a WPOA and APOA young ambassador respectively and how they have benefited from this unique WPOA/APOA initiative. This was followed by talks given by each young ambassador on their research project of choice (Figure 5). Kar presented on "Minimally invasive calcaneal osteotomy: Clinical results and relevance to Talusan's Zone" while Michiel presented on "Ultrasound guided peripheral nerve blocks for non-operative management of distal radius fractures" (Figure 6). This was capped off with a Young Ambassador's dinner with council members of APOA and presidents of various international orthopaedic societies e.g. EFORT, SICOT, Turkish, German etc. (Figure 7). This provided the young surgeons an invaluable opportunity to network with these important people and obtained an insight in their interesting career path. We also had a chance to meet our current EFORT president (Prof Önder Aydingöz) and incoming president (Prof Per Kjaersgaard-Andersen). Kar also had the chance to meet the British Orthopaedic Association President, Prof. Ananda Nanu, at the conference who gave one of the plenary lectures and discuss with him the current issues facing British Orthopaedics.



Figure 5. Picture following our presentations with Prof. Ted Mah, Prof. David Choon and Dr. Jamal Ashraf



Figure 6. Michiel and I presenting our research



Figure 7. The young ambassadors' dinner with the presidents of various international societies

APOA was very generous to organize a private tour to Aspendos and Perge for the 13 young ambassadors on the third day of the congress, which we thoroughly enjoyed (Figure 8 & 9). The region around Antalya is filled with loads of historical significance. We also attended the congress dinner that night where we were presented on stage with the certificates of our fellowship by the president of APOA capping off one of the most memorable week we had in our young orthopaedic career. This was followed by the presidential handing over ceremony from Prof. David Choon of Malaysia to Prof. Mahmut Nedim Doral of Turkey.



Figure 8. The young ambassadors at Aspendos



Figure 9. The young ambassadors at Perge

We would firstly like to thank EFORT for choosing us to represent Europe and giving us this excellent opportunity, which has definitely made a positive impact on our future orthopaedics careers. Not only have we met today's leaders of Orthopaedics, we have forged links with tomorrow's leaders of Orthopaedics. The lasting friendship and the bond we developed over the past week will carry all thirteen of us through our long career and we know this is not the last time we are going to meet. In fact, this will be the first of many meetings and we are looking forward to collaborate on research projects, utilizing each other's strengths.

Secondly, we would like to thank Prof. Önder Aydingöz for making himself readily accessible to us and continuously keeping us in the loop prior to the APOA meeting and for his warm Turkish hospitality (Figure 10). For those who do not know, Prof. Önder Aydingöz is not only the current EFORT President, he is also the APOA congress chairman and APOA Vice President. We could only be left in awe by his excellent time management skills and it is amazing how he is able to juggle all these responsibilities on top of a busy academic and clinical practice.



Figure 10. Michiel and I with Prof. Aydingöz and Prof. Kjaersgaard-Andersen

Thirdly, we would like to thank Dr. Jamal Ashraf for organizing the APOA 2018 Young Ambassador programme and Prof. Ted Mah & Prof. David Choon for being such ardent supporters of this wonderful initiative.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the other young ambassadors for the wonderful company and fond memories we had in the past week. This was truly East meet West for both of us. We have been inspired to contribute to the workings of EFORT in any way and we look forward to meeting the APOA-EFORT exchange fellows and SICOT-EFORT exchange fellows at this year's EFORT conference in Barcelona in May 2018.

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