

ESVS Educational Travel Grant Report

Aortic aneurysm repair technology has evolved dramatically in the last 2 decades. Beside conventional open surgical repair of aortic aneurysms, we have witnessed a paradigm shift towards endovascular stent graft repair of aortic aneurysms. I have developed an interest in aortic pathology since my early years of training, but as I have undergone my endovascular training mostly in one centre (Cambridge), I felt that another European experience will be valuable to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the different approaches in dealing with aortopathy patients in terms of investigation, diagnosis, treatment and logistics.

I have chosen the Uppsala Aortic Centre for this short visit due to their world-renowned reputation both clinically and academically and because Sweden is more generally one of the pioneering countries in endovascular treatment.

I had the opportunity to interact with all the team members in Uppsala, discussing different issues currently facing aortic surgery in Europe including new UK NICE guidelines, vascular registries, logistics as well as pathway and treatment modalities. I have joined them in their aortic multi-disciplinary meetings, discussed different patient and treatment options, and where I had the chance to be involved by voicing my opinion and positively adding to the collaborative debates. We also discussed different aspects of vascular training and the pathway in Sweden. We compared these to the UK pathway and training protocols, identifying the pros and cons of the system in both countries. This particularly helped me to get a better understanding of their background and treatment approaches. We also discussed the different research projects and potential areas of collaboration between Cambridge and Uppsala.

Most interestingly, I was allowed to be involved in the operating theatre on an elective and emergency basis, where I witnessed a great collaboration between the team members and other teams. Staff were very friendly and supportive, giving me all the information I needed and readily answering all my questions. In particular, I have observed a complex endovascular abdominal aneurysm repair and a few PTA cases. I also had the chance to observe an emergency embolectomy and an arterial reconstruction of a premature baby, which was especially interesting.

During my short one week stay, I also attended the Uppsala Aortic Summit, which was intense, extensive and covered contemporary topics of advanced informative nature. The entire experience in Uppsala was extremely educational and gratifying. It has widened my horizons toward a better understanding of the aortic pathology for my future practice. On a more personal level, I also enjoyed the great city of Uppsala, home of the oldest university in Scandinavia and with an authentic Nordic feel.

I would like to thank Prof. Kevin Mani, Prof. Anders Wanhainen and the rest of the team in Uppsala for giving me this great opportunity and I will definitely consider applying for the Uppsala Aortic Fellowship in the upcoming future.

Finally, I would like to thank the ESVS for their help and support in facilitating this invaluable visit and pleasant stay in Uppsala.

Should you have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at: cezar.sabbagh@doctors.net.uk

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