

## **MACP Educational Bursary**

In an era of increasing restrictions on funding streams available to support educational conferences I was lucky enough to apply and was successful in obtaining an educational grant from the MACP to attending the 8th interdisciplinary world congress on low back and pelvic pain held in Dubai this October.

Landing in Dubai early Sunday morning I was excited about the 4 day programme with the overarching theme of promoting advances in multidisciplinary research for better spinal and pelvic care.

Arriving I was hit not only by the heat but by the excellent conference organisation by Andry Vleeming and his team. With nearly a thousand delegates from over 56 countries, registration, food and facilities were excellent and the experience of this international conference has reassured me the IFOMPT 2016 in Glasgow has already planned all the key ingredients needed for a successful conference.

Day one started with an excellent talk from Peter Reeves prompting us to think about spinal stability with an interactive lecture on lessons from balancing a stick. This lead into research looking at the role of fascia and it's major role in effective load transfer. These points were reinforced both by anatomical dissections revealing the extent of fascial interconnections but also real time ultrasound studies of the global action of all core muscles through fascia rather than isolated muscle working.

Day two highlight for me was the session lead by Paul Hodges exploring plasticity in both the sensory and motor system and how we may influence the process with neuromodulatory techniques.

Day three highlights for me included lecturers from Maurits van Tulder discussing cost effectiveness of primary care interventions on LBP providing background knowledge on the methodology used in looking at cost effectiveness. This was new knowledge for me will help me question more closely decision made on treatment selection that affect my practice within the NHS.

This talk lead nicely to Margreth Grotle who explored outcome measures in research and clinical practice and the use of patient specific functional scale or patient generated index to help validate our practice.

Day four, with conference fatigue slightly setting in, the audience gathered to hear the final talk on antibiotic treatment to patients with lumbar pain. After the recent news interest in this research it was nice to have a chance to discuss the research with the main author Hanne Albert. An excellent engaging speaker she held the audiences interest to the very end of the conference and has made me think about the new sub category of chronic pain LBP patients.

Although the draw of the conference was the selection of speakers in the main conference sessions I would encourage all people attending conferences to stay for the parallel sessions. Although short, these 10 minute sessions provide an insight into the direction of back and pelvic pain research within the International community.

As I boarded the plane after the gala dinner on the Thursday night I had time to reflect on the take home messages for me from the conference. My understanding of fascia and it's

foundation / structural role in mechanism of movement control has increased. As a trainee MSK sonography student I leave excited about starting to use this modality to look more closely at the fascial and myogenic system within the body.

The enthusiasm of the people presenting at the conference and the continued debate that extended well beyond the conference to the pool and the many restaurants in Dubai has renewed my interest in becoming active in post graduate research. As I land in Cardiff thoughts have already turned to PhD studies and the possibility of someday presenting my own research to the international MSK audience.

I would encourage all members to apply for these bursaries and visit the MACP website for information and closing dates for applications.

***Helen Welch***