**Bursary Report for the British Association of Hand Therapists**

**Paula Reynolds**

**BAHT Conference, Bournemouth, 6th & 7th October 2023**

**"What have you learned on the course and how will you be able to put the information you have gained into practice?"**

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| **Introduction:**  I am a Clinical Specialist Hand Therapist and Advanced Practice Physiotherapist (Trauma Orthopaedics) working in a busy acute hospitals trust on the South Coast. The majority of my work is with acute orthopaedic trauma, but includes post-operative therapy and management of non-acute conditions.  I applied for the bursary to enable to me to attend the BAHT Conference, allowing me to access educational opportunities, be inspired by my fellow hand therapists and network with other hand therapists.  The conference was well attended, well organised and in a fantastic location, with a varied program. |
| **Topic:**  **"What have you learned on the course and how will you be able to put the information you have gained into practice?"**  The title of this year’s conference was “In Our Hands” and the focus was on sustainability, with ‘sustainability’ spanning both the environment and the workforce. The 2 day program was varied and interesting with some inspiring speakers from both the UK and abroad. Sessions included symposia on implementing sustainability practice in an acute hospital trust, advanced practice, managing brachial plexus injuries, advances in thumb base osteoarthritis and ulna sided wrist pain. In addition, there were a variety of workshops, research updates and presentation of free papers, with ample opportunity to network with other therapists during the breaks. In addition, there was a selection of posters demonstrating a range of work, available to browse during breaks.  The conference was supported by several sponsors, with reps available from a number of the companies. Of interest to me were the products available from Cre-AID LABS, an Indian company who have developed a plant-based splinting material which they report to be compostable. Their product comes in pre-formed templates which are quickly and easily heat mouldable. We have been looking for simple splinting solutions for our team of advanced clinical practitioners working in the Emergency Department (ED) to use with hand and wrist injuries. These products have the potential to give us the solution we have been looking for with the additional benefit of reducing our environmental impact. We are looking to liaise with the Cre-AID team and our trust sustainability manager to pilot the use of their product in our ED setting.  Alex Nicholls (Consultant Orthopaedic hand & Upper limb Surgeon, Basingstoke & Winchester NHS Trust) and Kevin Spear (Consultant Hand Therapist, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Trust) presented complimentary symposia on thumb CMCJ arthroplasty. CMCJ arthroplasty has only just been introduced to our trust, so it was very interesting learning about patient selection, the procedure itself and outcomes. From a therapy perspective, it was great to hear about Kevin’s experiences rehabilitating these post-operatively. I look forward to seeing some of these coming through our department in the coming year.  We had research updates from 2 therapists, the second of which was of most interest to me, having been involved in the OTTER trial a few years ago. Anna Selby presented the SCOOTT trial looking at conservative and surgical management on thumb base arthritis. As a department we will be contacting Anna, with the potential to join the trial as a clinical site.  On the second day we had a joint symposium from Tom Quick (Consultant Peripheral Nerve Surgeon) and Hazel Brown (Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist) from RNOH, Stanmore, talking about brachial plexus injuries. This was an interesting and engaging talk looking at the surgical management of these injuries and the rehab involved, with a brilliant film by a patient documenting his progress. The ‘take-home’ points I gained from this talk were the need for timely referrals to avoid long term effects on the muscles, and that we, as therapists, can refer patients to RNOH without requiring a medical referral. This is something I will be feeding back to my upper limb therapy colleagues  Thank you to the BAHT committee for allowing me the opportunity to attend conference, something I would encourage therapists of all levels to try and do.  Word count: 535 |