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

**BAHT Bursary**

**IFSSH, IFSHT and FESSH Combined Congress**

**6-10th June 2022**

***Introduction:***

I am proud to have worked as a hand therapist for 20 years. My role as an autonomous advanced clinical specialist is divided between private and NHS services. The clinics cover MSK, elective post-operative care and leading a therapy led trauma clinic. Since 2019 I have also been involved in the BSSH overseas project in Sierra Leone. Supporting the development of the first reconstruction unit in the country through education, mentoring and training of therapy and medical staff. I was honoured to be asked to present the successes and challenges of our project at the 2022 Combined Congress in London. As a private practitioner funds for courses and conferences are limited and I applied to BAHT for a bursary for help with costs. It was also a great opportunity to take advantage of attending when the congress was here in London which would limit some of the costs of travel and accommodation

***Topic***

The Excel London is an extensive and spacious venue providing a large main exhibitors area and a multitude of lecture rooms. The conference programme had educational lectures, workshops, free papers and on line posters for both therapists and surgeons. The main therapy and surgical auditorium lectures were recorded each day and access provided to watch on an online platform at a later date. With this in mind I chose to attend smaller lectures so overall increasing the number of lectures I was able to see using the catch up recordings. A conference app was available to download to help arrange and organise which talks or workshops you could attend and in which area of the venue they were running.

There was a great variety of conditions, topics and scientific programmes. Many of which provided me with new ideas, discussions and even consolidated treatments/knowledge I already have. I particularly enjoyed some of the surgical sessions which were structured as debates. The session questioning “Does CRPS exist?” reminded me to be open to new theories and ideas to thinking outside of our current scientific understanding. Gained knowledge from this conference will improve my clinical practice and patient care. This has not been just from research presented but also from the practical tips, tricks and demonstrations. I was interested to hear of the fracture traction splints being used by colleagues and hope to explore the available training to make these but also to discuss with my consultant their use within the therapy led trauma clinic. The congress increased my awareness of both national and international research projects. I hope to return to my unit/clinics to consider with my multidisciplinary team being involved in a UK based multicentre clinical trial.

Taking part as a presenter was personally very daunting. It was the first face to face large audience talk I have given. I learnt a lot about my own personal style of presenting where I feel comfortable with mainly pictorial slides allowing me to focus on talking which helps manage my nerves. I was proud to be part of the dedicated and passionate team who support our overseas projects and colleagues.

After two years of pandemic restrictions it was wonderful to network and socialise face to face with both UK and international therapists and surgeons. Thank you to BAHT for all their support and making my attendance to to the international congress possible.