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

**Gemma Willis**

**[BAHT Conference October 2023]**

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| **Introduction:**  I am currently working as a band 7 in a team lead post within a hand therapy unit. I specialised in the field of hand therapy in 2006. My passion for hand therapy is driven by the ability it offers for lifelong learning. I applied for this bursary to attend the BAHT conference as this was a great opportunity to learn about the wide range of research that is taking place within the field of hand therapy. I would like to thank the BAHT committee for the funding and opportunity to attend this event.  **Word count: 94** |
| **Topic:**  With a focus on sustainability, the 2023 BAHT conference highlighted the importance of the NHS reducing its carbon footprint and to fit with the NHS green plan. This encouraged reflection on how we can as individuals can make small changes in our services, considering our use of material, waste management and staff sustainability. Attended the X-lite splinting workshop has encouraged me to reintroduce this biodegradable splinting material back into my clinical practice. I learnt some practical tips that will be helpful with splint fabrication and following on from the conference our team has now arranged to host a free X-lite workshop to help train our staff and others in the local area.  Within my clinical practice within the last few months, I have taken on additional responsibility for some neurological hand patient requiring splinting. As part of this process, I have issued a small number of patients with SOT splints. I found the splinting workshop on Optimising successful and sustainable splinting a valuable learning experience to help with these patients. The workshop provided some useful tips on how to successfully adjust the SOT splints and consideration of splinting position with the neuro hand. These splints offer a more long-term solution for patients requiring ongoing splinting. Likewise, the additional workshop on silver splints demonstrated another long-term splinting option. It is helpful to learn about these splinting developments and during the conference I was able to make links with our local therapists who has experience of ordering silver ring splints through WeDesign that may be beneficial for certain patients.  With the introduction of CMC joint arthroplasty now being used by our local orthopaedic consultants the symposium on this topic was of particularly interest. The presentation on the surgical procedure improved my knowledge of how these implants have been developed over time and the surgical techniques. We have locally had some discussion about what the post op hand therapy guidelines should look like with these patients, and it was helpful to hear how these have been developed at Winchester.  I was interested to hear about the update for the FIRST study as we are currently recruiting at our local hospital. It was inspired to hear Emma Bamford talk about how a simple question had developed over many years into a multicentred RCT. Additional further local research opportunity were highlighted including the planned SCOOTT study. Having gained recent PI experience for the FIRST study, I am interested in discussing this trial further with our local orthopaedic consultant to see if this is something they would be interested in participating in.  Attending a conference is always highly motivating and a great networking opportunity to link with colleagues from across the country. I was lucky enough to be able to produce and share a poster presentation at the conference, which it not something that I have ever done before. It was inspiring to hear therapist present on a wide range of research and service improvement projects as part of the free paper sessions which is something to aspire to in the future.  **Word count: 506** |