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

**Carolyn Macdonald**

**Management of Traumatic Injuries to the Hand**

**6th – 8th June 2024**

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| **Introduction:** I am an Occupational Therapist in an out-patient hand therapy team. I see patients referred from plastic surgery and orthopaedics. The majority of my caseload involves the assessment and treatment patients following traumatic injury and surgery.I previously completed BAHT Level 1, and two BAHT level 2 courses on the PIPJ and Fractures. I was keen to complete the BAHT level 2 on the management of Traumatic injuries to further my knowledge and recognise my professional competence and skills in this area. On a personal level I also wanted to gain further BAHT points to help my with my long term goal of becoming a BAHT Accredited Hand Therapist.  |
| **Topic:**The course was organised and hosted by the Oxford Hand Therapy Unit. Over the three days there was a mixture of lectures and practical workshops delivered by Consultants, a Psychologist and the Hand Therapy team who work within the trauma service in Oxford.The first day started with the anatomy of the hand. After this there were lectures on nerve anatomy, nerve injury and nerve repair. Separate lectures on ulnar, median and radial nerve deficit and rehabilitation. One of the main take home messages I learnt from these lectures was from the management of nerve injuries that muscle end plates stop functioning if not stimulated. I learnt this is usually after 18 months and that early exploration is the gold standard.Subjective and objective assessment of the trauma hand followed in the afternoon and practical workshops on scar management, oedema management, desensitisation and sensory re-education.I was reminded of the benefits of measurement of oedema. I learnt of other methods to stimulate lymphatic drainage which I have not previously used. The sensory re-education workshop also provided me with some new treatment ideas. The second day started with a consultant led session on pain management. I don’t think I had fully appreciated the complexities in pain management prior to the course. It was interesting to learn the impact of the choice of analgesia and anaesthesia during the surgical procedure on successful pain control post operatively. I also have a greater understanding of the drugs, topical treatments and alternative therapies available to control neuropathic pain.The session on the psychology of hand injuries was very informative. I feel I have a greater understanding of Acute Stress Reaction, normal reaction to trauma, how to recognise individuals in distress and when to refer on. I could see the valuable contribution a Psychologist would make to a Trauma team.The following sessions on the second day were on fractures, extensor tendon repair and rehabilitation. Workshops at the end of the day were on differential testing, splinting and exercise.The third day covered lectures on flexor tendon injuries, complex injuries and complications. Workshops were on neural, bone and soft tissue complications prior to the exam.The session on complex injuries gave me a greater understanding of the surgical approach to extensive upper limb trauma. The importance of creating a stable skeletal base and the challenges of having combined bone, vascular, nerve and tendon involvement.The speakers were happy to answer questions throughout each day. There were also valuable contributions from other delegates. Group discussion in the workshops allowed therapists to share their approaches. It was interesting that there continue to be differences in treatment approaches particularly surrounding tendon repair rehabilitation.I am extremely grateful to BAHT for supporting me under the bursary scheme to assist me to fund and attend this course. I plan to share the knowledge and skills I have learn with my team and review our treatment guidelines. |