

## SASCI RC Fraser International Fellowship Feedback

11 December 2017

Dear SASCI Team,

I have just returned from 4 fantastic weeks at St Thomas' Hospital in London with Professor Simon Redwood. I was made to feel very welcome by Simon and his team, and have been involved in fantastic cases in the cathlab.

Tuesday and Wednesday are TAVI days in the lab at St Thomas'. Simon and Professor Bernard Prendergast are the primary TAVI operators, and they currently have an international TAVI fellow placed with them. They are able to perform 6 TAVI's per week, and during my time there they implanted the Sapien 3, Evolut R and Acurate Neo valves, mostly via transfemoral, but also transapical routes. To my knowledge Acurate Neo is not yet available in South Africa. It is a self-expanding valve made by Symetis and is currently being trialled against the Sapien 3 valve in the SCOPE 1 trial. They have TAVI implantation down to a fine art there, and I have learned the benefit of having an experienced TAVI Team to make sure everything runs smoothly. I attended the TAVI multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings where all prospective TAVI cases were discussed in detail and plans made for the procedure. It was interesting to see the prominent role of the clinical nurse specialists who are an integral part of the programme, including seeing patients in the clinic, ordering specialized investigations and communicating results and plans to patients telephonically.



**Prof Simon Redwood and Brad Griffiths in the lab.**

I was also involved in the daily coronary work in the labs. It was reassuring from my side to see that their approach to coronary intervention is very similar to how we practice back home, with a largely symptoms-based approach and liberal use of FFR. I was privileged to sit in on the coronary MDT meetings, where there is a relaxed, non-confrontational atmosphere with good banter between the surgeons and interventional cardiologists, which no doubt contributes positively to patient care.

In addition to TAVI and coronary intervention, which was the bulk of my exposure there, I was also involved in the PFO closure list, performed by Dr Brian Clapp, and a Coronary Sinus Reducer list, performed by Professor Redwood. These are interventions with an increasing evidence base that are no doubt going to gain traction in South Africa, and it was fantastic to be exposed to the processes of patient selection, planning and implantation for these procedures.

Just as valuable as the procedural work being done, but more difficult to quantify, has been the experience of being side-by-side with experienced interventional cardiologists discussing day-in and day-out all manner of topics related to interventional cardiology. From recent trials (particularly ORBITA, CULPRIT-SHOCK and the PFO Closure trials) to device selection, to lesion preparation, to circulatory support. This really has been an invaluable experience, and will no doubt improve my future practice.

Special thanks must go to the following people who made me feel very welcome at St Thomas' Hospital cathlab: Professor Simon Redwood, Professor Bernard Prendergast, Dr Jane Hancock, Dr Brian Clapp, Dr Maciej Marciniak, Dr Antonis Pavlidis, Dr Divaka Perera, Dr Rupert Williams, Dr Stefano Cannata and Dr Kalpa De Silva. In addition to this all of the cathlab allied health and support staff contributed positively to my experience.

Of course, in addition to lab work I also used my free time to take in some of the famous London sights, and travelled to Cardiff in Wales to watch the Springbok game, which, despite the result not going our way, was a fantastic experience.



Thanks again must go to SASCI and Boston Scientific for making this experience possible.

Best wishes  
Brad Griffiths  
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